

THE RANI OF KITTUR

When Chenamma, the queen of Kittur, lost her only son she was steeped in sorrow. But when her husband reminded her that even the people of Kittur were her children she pulled herself together and devoted her life to their well-being. So committed was she to the honour and welfare of her land that when the British came asking for its allegiance she took on their military strength and fought them to the end.

BRAVEHEARTS



THE RANI OF KITTUR

THE DEFIANT QUEEN

Vol 748 | ₹50

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THE RANI OF KITTUR



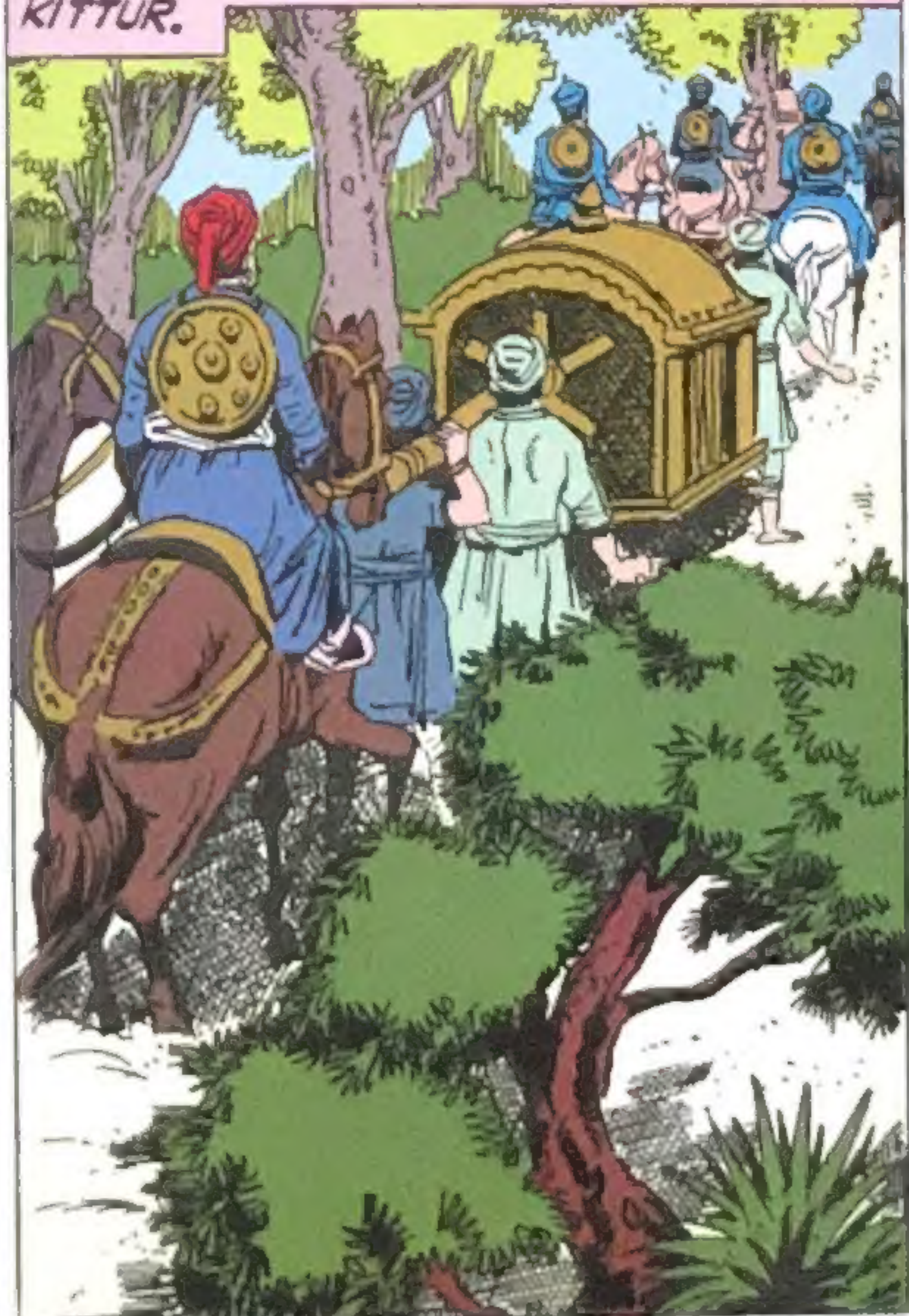
WHEN CHENNAMMA, THE DAUGHTER OF DHOOLAPPA GOWDA, THE DESAI *OF KAGATI,‡ MARRIED MALLASARJA, THE KING OF KITTUR,§ SHE WAS BARELY SIXTEEN.

CHENNAMMA TOOK LEAVE OF HER FATHER WITH A HEAVY HEART.

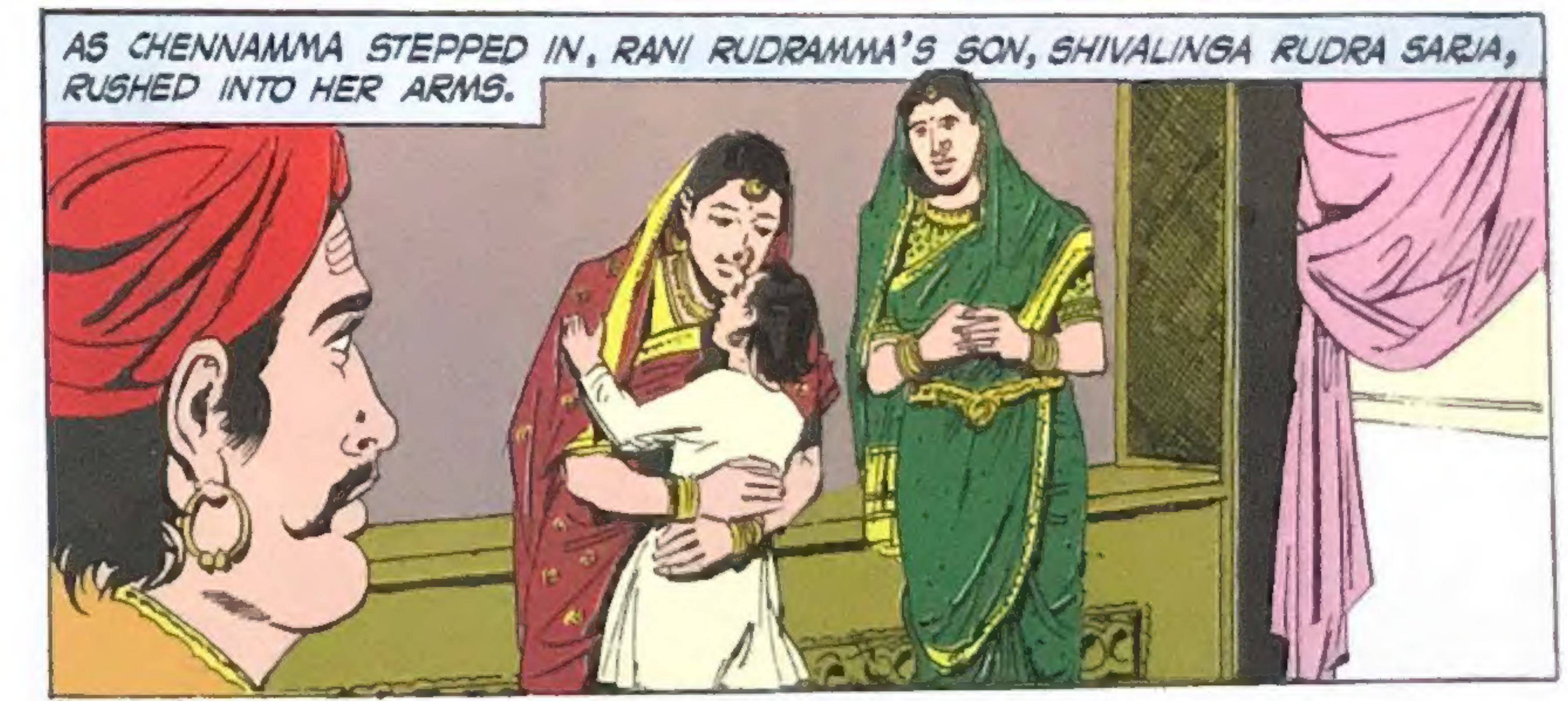
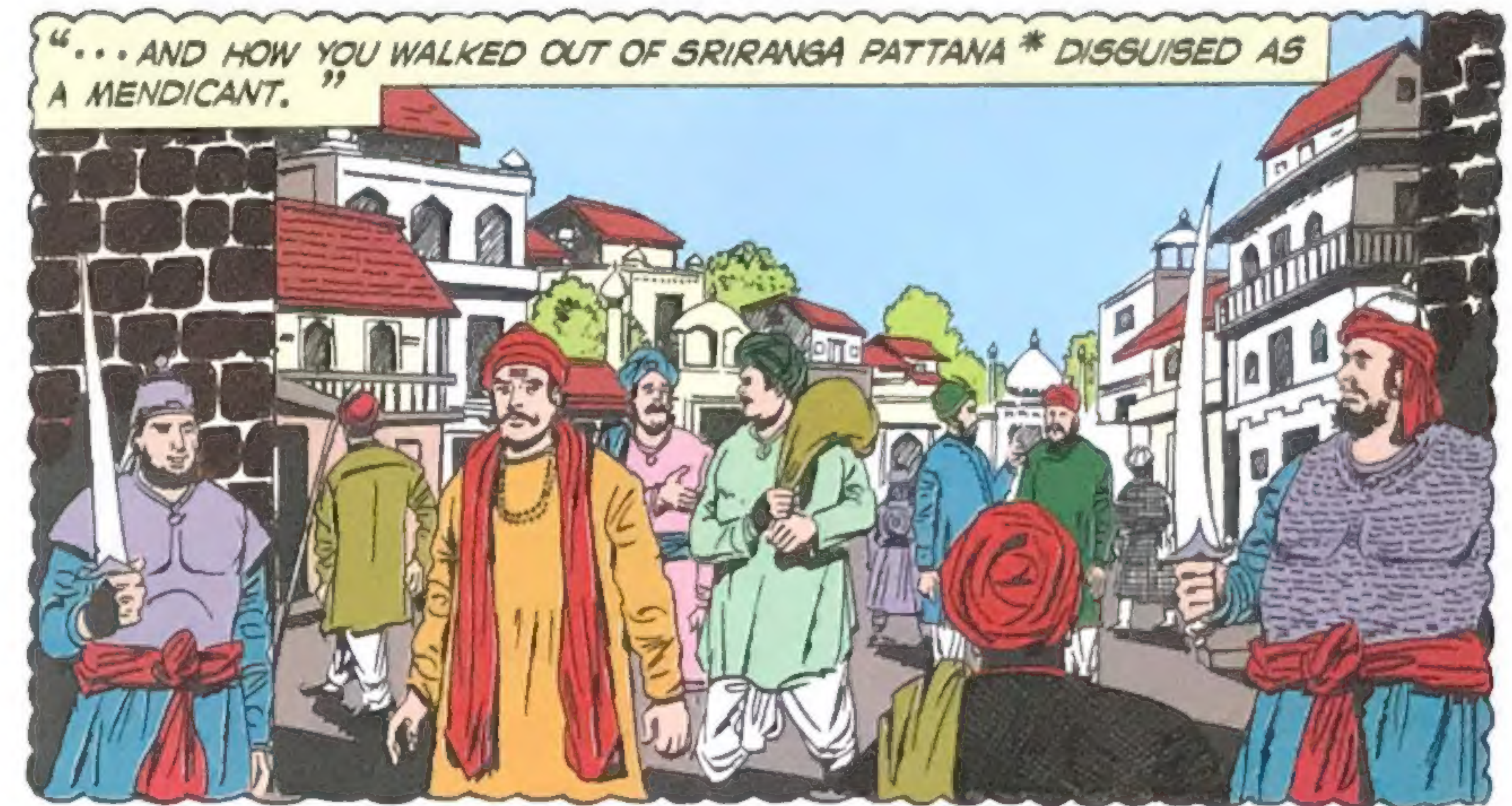
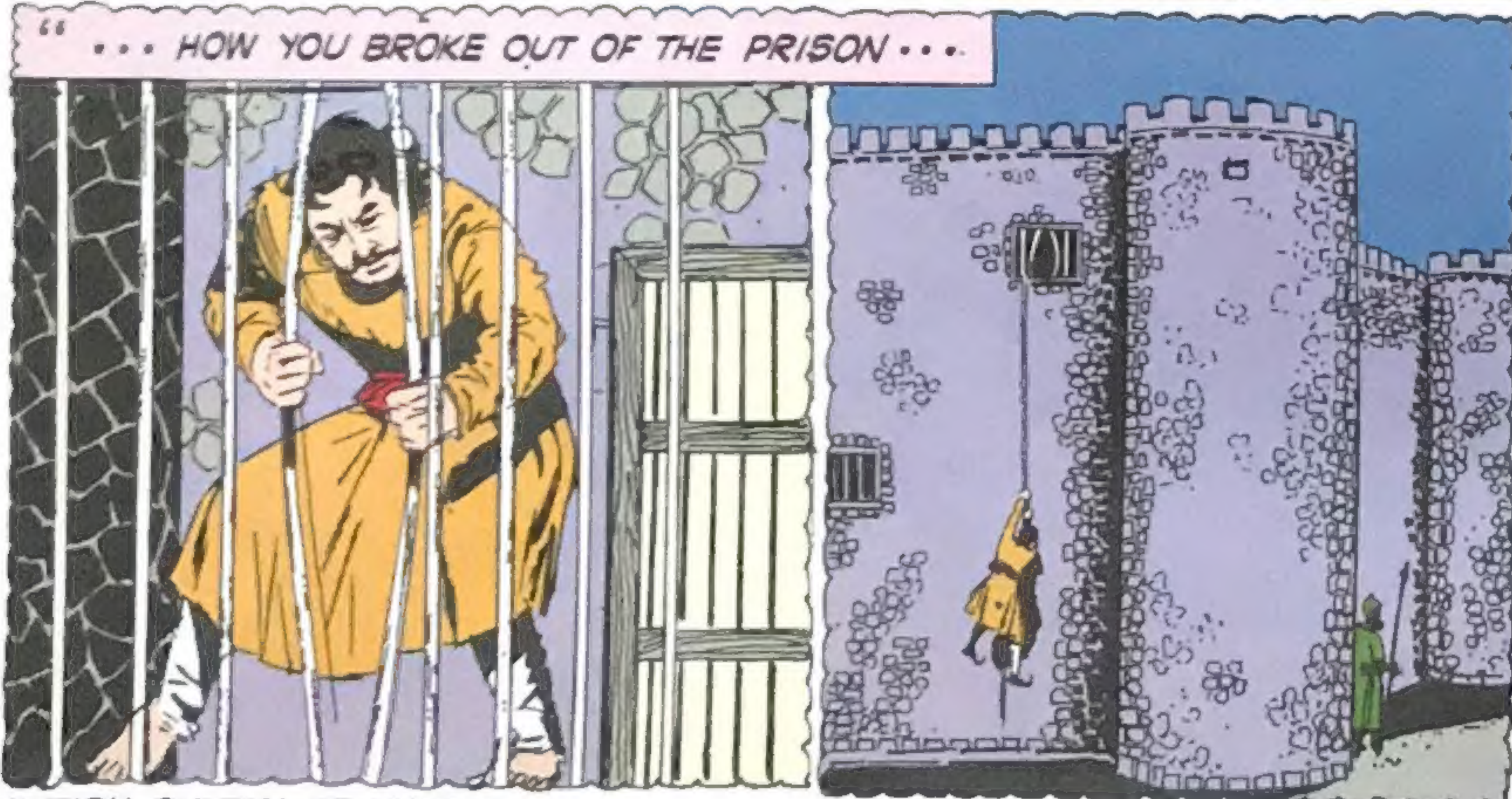
CHENNA,
SERVE YOUR
HUSBAND,
AND KITTUR WITH
WHOLE-HEARTED
DEVOTION.



WITH THE LOVING COUNSEL ECHOING IN HER HEART, CHENNAMMA LEFT FOR KITTUR.

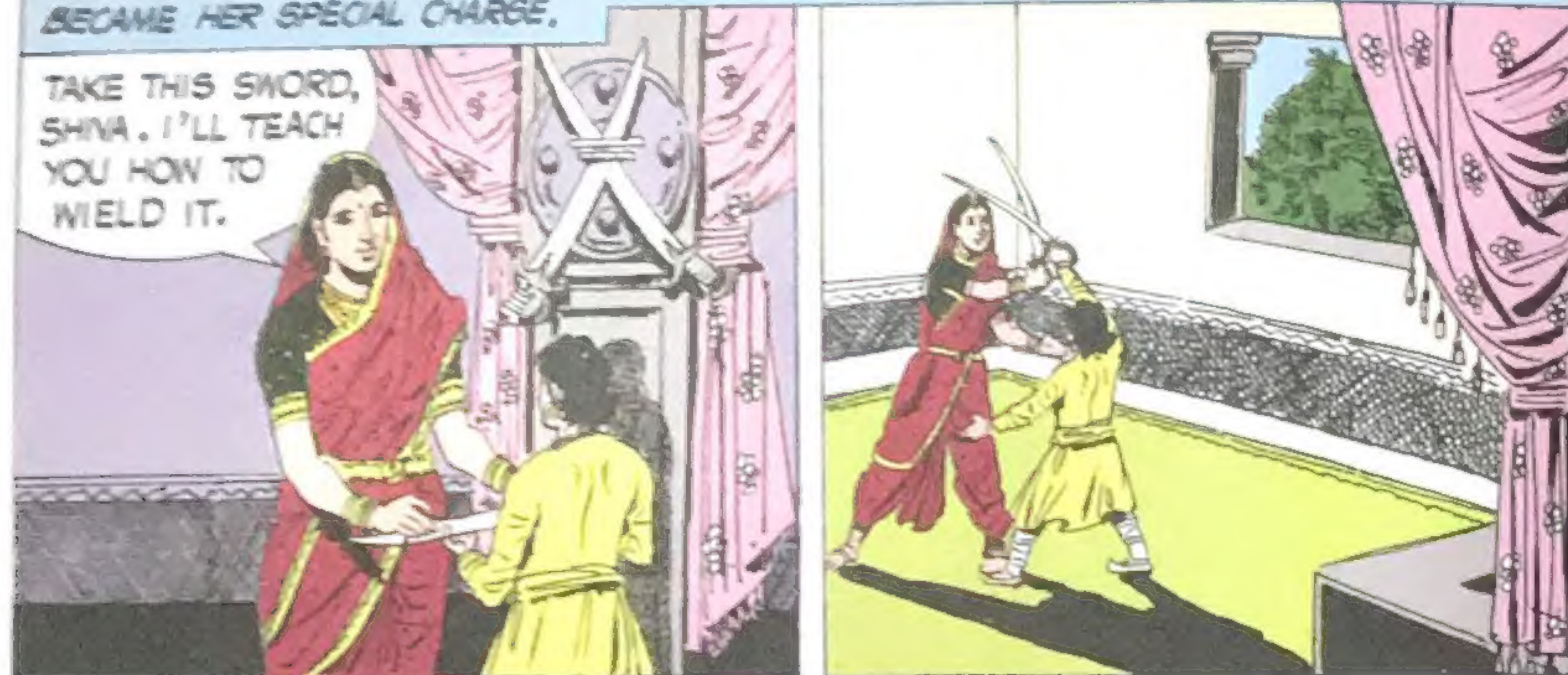


* CHIEFTAIN ‡ NEAR BELGAUM IN KARNATAKA



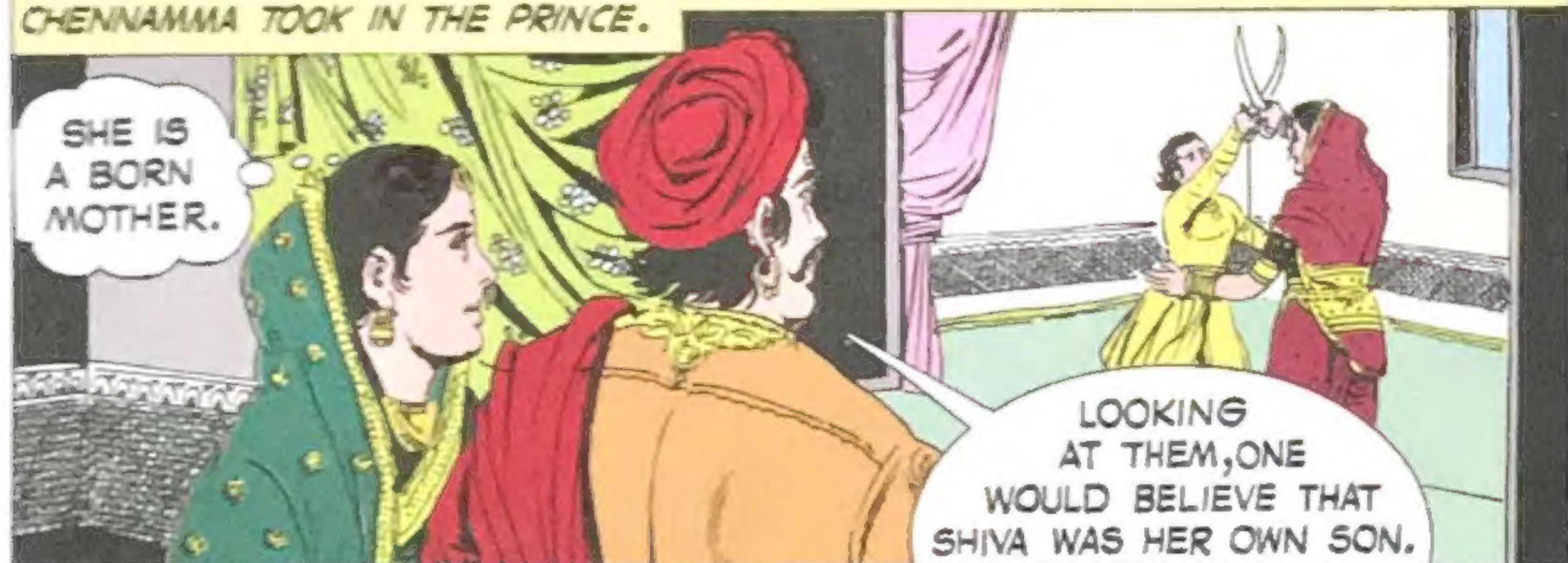
WHILE CHENNAMMA SOON WON THE AFFECTION OF ALL AT HER NEW HOME, THE PRINCE BECAME HER SPECIAL CHARGE.

TAKE THIS SWORD, SHIVA. I'LL TEACH YOU HOW TO WIELD IT.



RUDRAMMA AND MALLASARJA WERE TOUCHED AND PLEASED TO SEE THE INTEREST CHENNAMMA TOOK IN THE PRINCE.

SHE IS A BORN MOTHER.

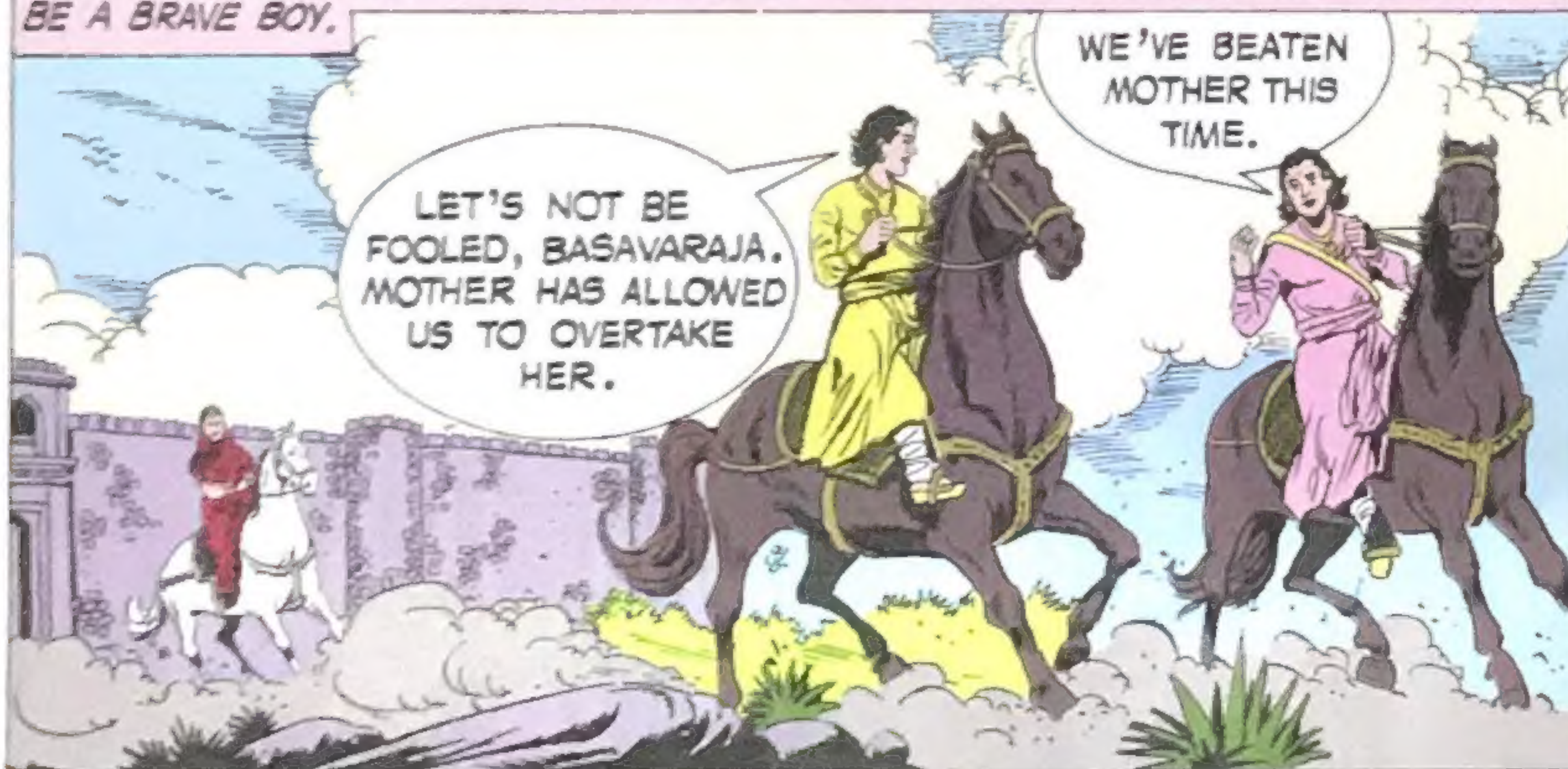


LOOKING AT THEM, ONE WOULD BELIEVE THAT SHIVA WAS HER OWN SON.

A FEW YEARS LATER, CHENNAMMA TOO BORE A SON, BASAVARAJA, WHO GREW UP TO BE A BRAVE BOY.

WE'VE BEATEN MOTHER THIS TIME.

LET'S NOT BE FOOLED, BASAVARAJA. MOTHER HAS ALLOWED US TO OVERTAKE HER.



WHEN THEY CAME OF AGE, MALLASARJA ARRANGED THE WEDDING OF THE PRINCES. SHIVALINGA RUDRA SARJA MARRIED VEERAMMA AND BASAVARAJA, JANAKAMMA.



FIVE YEARS LATER, CHENNAMMA'S SON DIED.

CHENNA SITS BROODING ALL THE TIME. IT IS NOT GOOD FOR HER.



CHENNA, YOU WEEP FOR A SON WHO IS DEAD, WHILE THE REST OF YOUR CHILDREN REMAIN NEGLECTED.



CHENNAMMA WAS PERPLEXED.

THE REST OF MY CHILDREN—MY CHILDREN?

YES, CHENNA. AS THE QUEEN, ARE YOU NOT THE MOTHER OF ALL OUR SUBJECTS?



THE MESSAGE WENT HOME. CHENNAMMA WEPT NO MORE. SHE BEGAN TO TAKE A PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE WELFARE OF HER SUBJECTS.

RANI SAHEB, THE RAINS FAILED THIS YEAR, TOO. OUR VILLAGE FACES STARVATION.

DON'T WORRY. WE WILL HAVE GRAINS RUSHED TO YOUR VILLAGE.

SHE BEGAN TO TOUR EXTENSIVELY. ON ONE SUCH OCCASION —

WHO ARE YOU?

THE PORTUGUESE BROUGHT US AS SLAVES FROM AFRICA, RANI SAHEB. WE ESCAPED FROM GOA* BUT WE HAVE NO HOME.

MAKE KITTUR YOUR HOME. YOU SHALL BE GIVEN LAND.

RANI SAHEB, WE SHALL NEVER FORGET YOUR KINDNESS.

*GOA WAS THEN UNDER PORTUGUESE OCCUPATION

ON ANOTHER OCCASION —

YOUR MOSQUE IS IN RUINS. WHY DON'T YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT?

AMATUR SAYID, A PIOUS MUSLIM STEPPED FORWARD.

WE WANT TO RENOVATE IT, RANI SAHEB. BUT WE DO NOT HAVE THE FUNDS.

HAVE IT RE-PAIRED. THE STATE WILL PAY FOR IT.

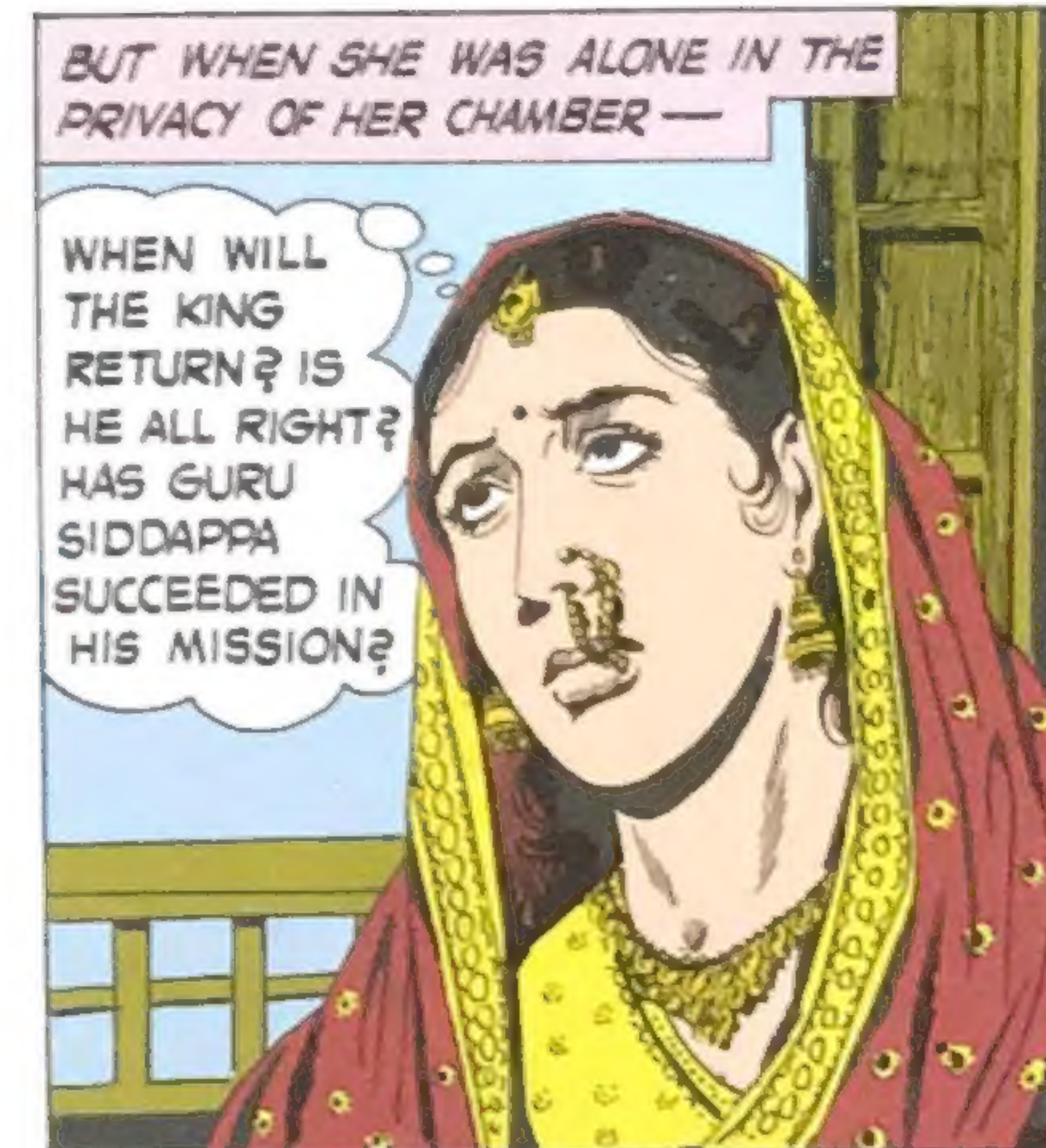
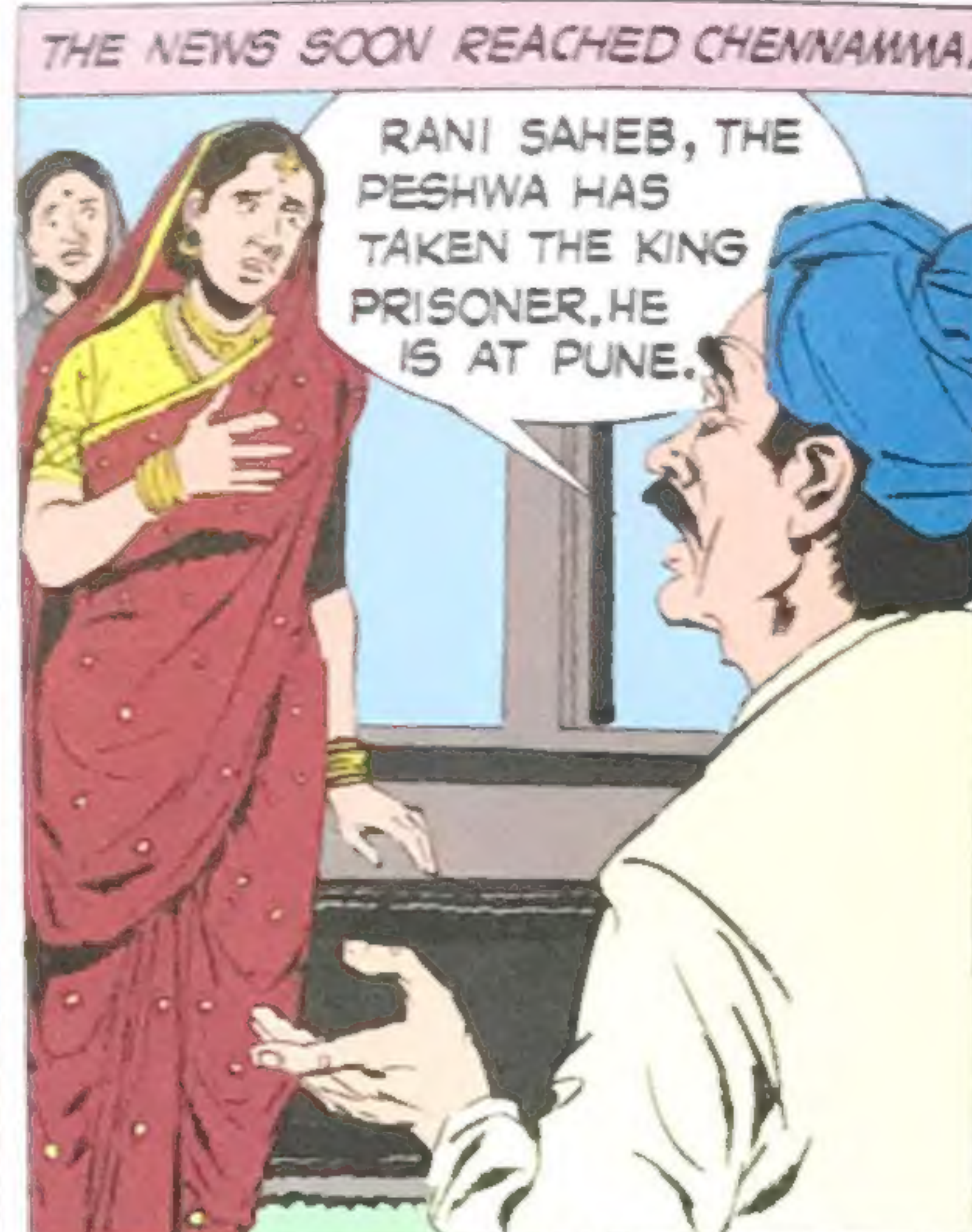
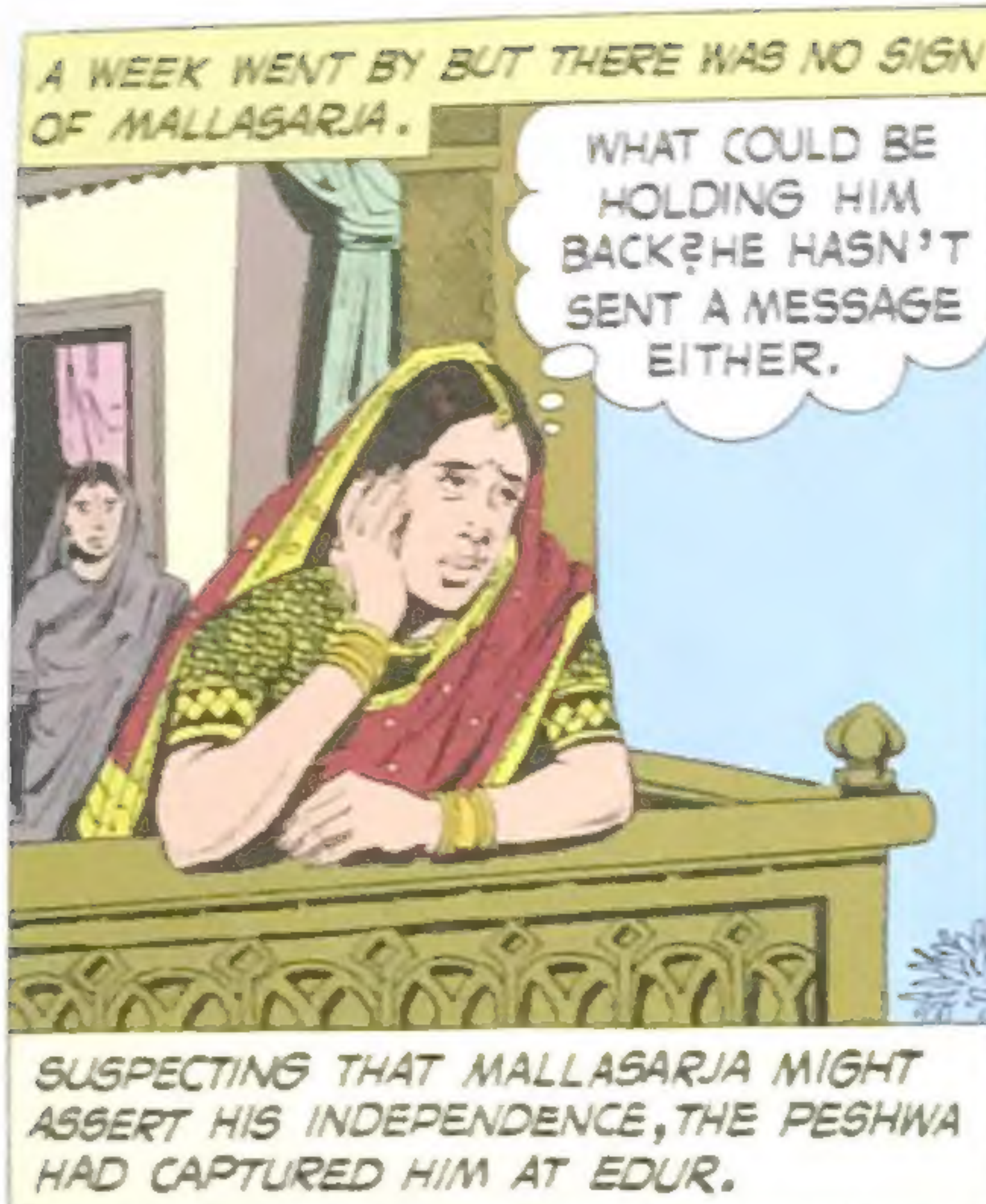
LATER, WHEN CHENNAMMA CAME TO SEE THE RENOVATED MOSQUE —

RANI SAHEB, IN YOU WE HAVE FOUND A MOTHER.

ONE DAY —

I HAVE BEEN SUMMONED BY THE PESHWA TO EDUR WHERE HE IS CAMPING. I'LL BE BACK SOON, CHENNA.

I HOPE THE PESHWA IS NOT ANNOYED WITH YOU FOR NOT CALLING ON HIM EARLIER.





BUSY WITH THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CORONATION OF SHIVALINGA RUDRA SARJA, CHENNAMMA DID NOT HAVE TIME TO GRIEVE OR BROOD. SHE WAS THE FIRST TO BLESS THE NEW KING.



TWO YEARS LATER, WAR BROKE OUT BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND THE PESHWA.



WHEN TOLD ABOUT IT, CHENNAMMA WAS SHOCKED.

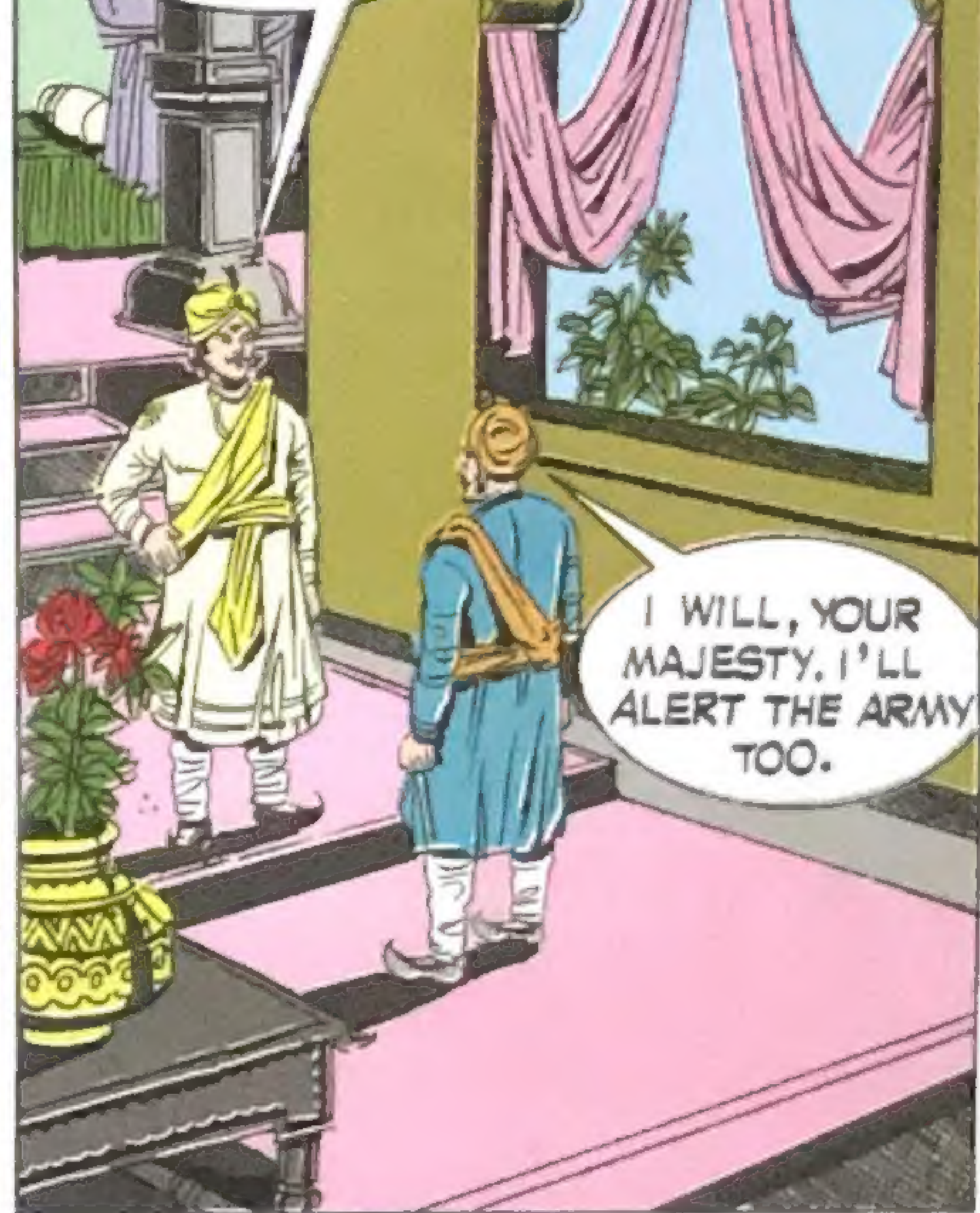
SHIVA, ON NO ACCOUNT SHOULD YOU HELP THE ALIENS AGAINST OUR COUNTRYMEN!

DON'T STOP ME, MOTHER! THE PESHWA KILLED MY FATHER. I WILL NOT LOSE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO AVENGE MY FATHER'S DEATH.



AND SHIVALINGA RUDRA SARJA SUMMONED MALLAPPA, HIS TRUSTED OFFICIAL.

INFORM THE BRITISH THAT THE FORCES OF KITTUR WILL FIGHT ON THEIR SIDE AT BELGAUM.



AND DESPITE CHENNAMMA'S DISAPPROVAL, THE SOLDIERS OF KITTUR FOUGHT SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE BRITISH.



BELGAUM FELL. ACCOMPANIED BY MALLAPPA AND VENKATA RAO, SHIVALINGA RUDRA SARJA CALLED ON SIR THOMAS MUNRO.



WE RECOGNIZE YOU AND YOUR SUCCESSORS AS THE RULERS OF KITTUR. YOU WILL PAY US AN ANNUAL TRIBUTE OF A LAKH AND SEVENTY THOUSAND RUPEES.

WHEN SHIVALINGA RUDRA SARJA RETURNED TO KITTUR —



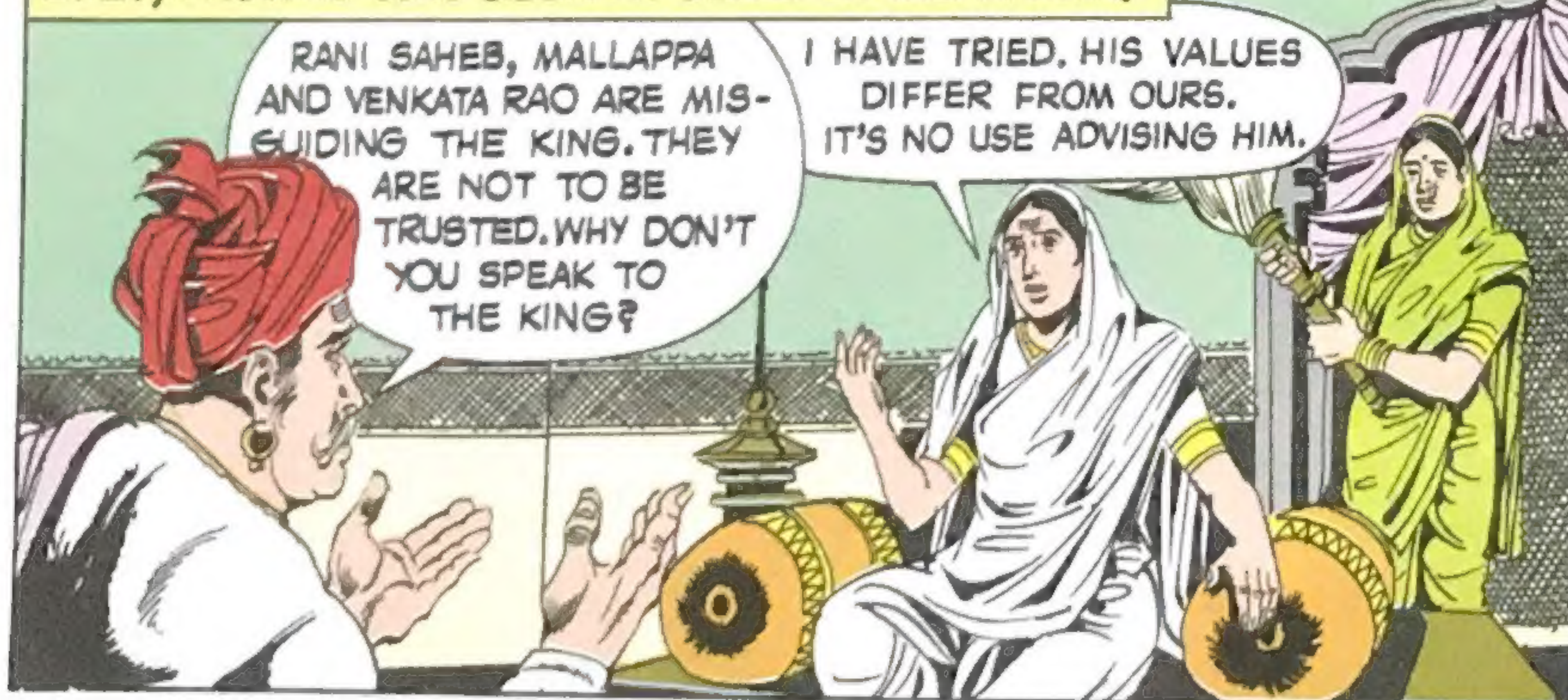
YOU HAVE STAINED THE HONOUR OF KITTUR BY SIGNING THAT TREATY!



BUT THE TREATY HAS BROUGHT US SECURITY. NOW WE HAVE THE PROTECTION OF THE BRITISH.

ALAS, MY SON!

LATER, A FRANTIC GURU SIDDAPPA CALLED ON CHENNAMMA.



RANI SAHEB, MALLAPPA AND VENKATA RAO ARE MISGUIDING THE KING. THEY ARE NOT TO BE TRUSTED. WHY DON'T YOU SPEAK TO THE KING?

I HAVE TRIED. HIS VALUES DIFFER FROM OURS. IT'S NO USE ADVISING HIM.

MEANWHILE SHIVALINGA RUDRA SARJA SUDDENLY FELL ILL.



MOTHER, I WON'T LIVE LONG. I HAVE NO SON. KITTUR NEEDS AN HEIR.

HUSH, MY SON. YOU'LL RECOVER.

BUT HIS CONDITION ONLY DETERIORATED. AT LAST ON HIS DEATH-BED, HE ADOPTED A SON.* AFTER THE CEREMONY—



MOTHER, WILL YOU TAKE CARE OF THE KINGDOM TILL MY SON COMES OF AGE?

I WILL, SHIVA.

GURU SIDDAPPA HURRIEDLY WROTE OUT A LETTER TO THE BRITISH, INFORMING THEM OF THE ADOPTION AND THE DYING KING SIGNED IT.



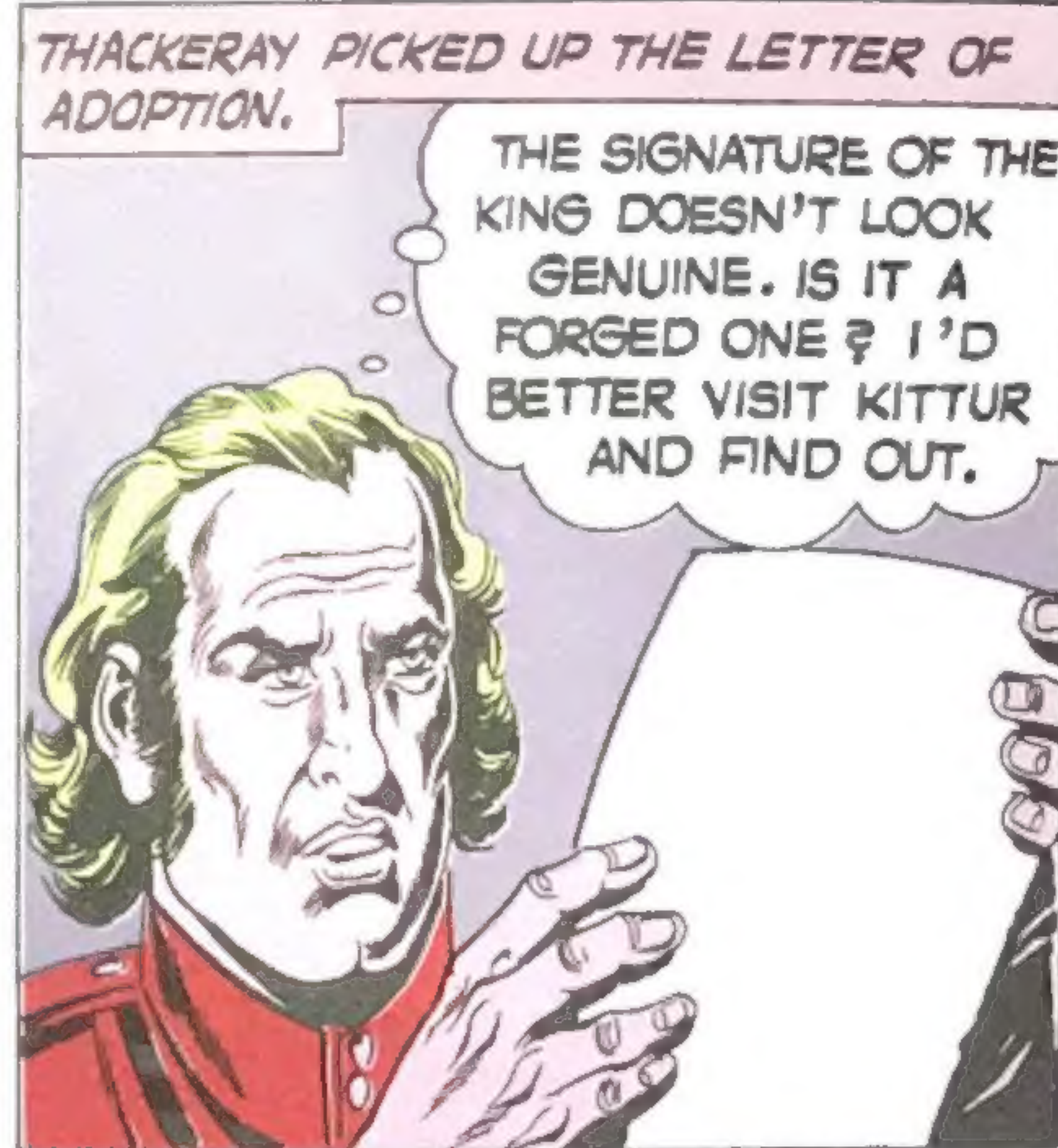
WHEN THE MESSAGE WAS DELIVERED THAT VERY DAY TO THACKERAY, THE BRITISH POLITICAL AGENT AT DHARWAR —



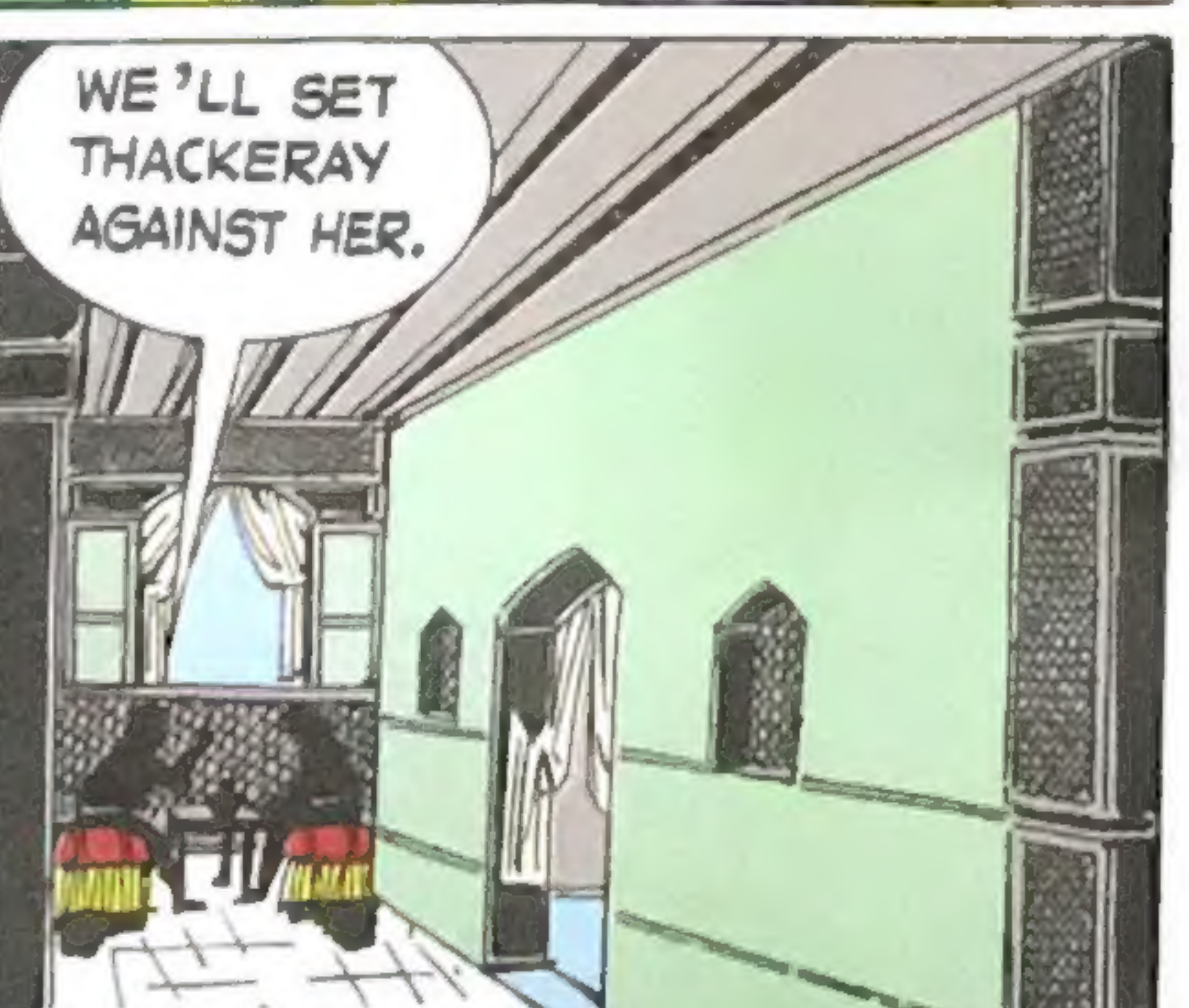
I WILL SEND DR. BELL TO KITTUR TO TREAT THE KING.

DR. BELL LEFT FOR KITTUR IMMEDIATELY.

* ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1824



MEANWHILE AT KITTUR, THE UNTIMELY DEATH OF SHIVALINGA RUDRA HAD COME AS A BLOW TO MALLAPPA AND VENKATA RAO.



AS THE TWO CONSPIRATORS RETURNED TO THE FORT—

THAT WAS PERFECT, MALLAPPA. THE TONE... THE MANNER... AS IF THE TRUTH HAD SLIPPED OUT...

NOW THACKERAY WILL SUSPECT FOUL PLAY AND WILL REFUSE TO RECOGNIZE THE ADOPTION.



LATER, WHEN GURU SIDDAPPA CALLED ON THACKERAY—

DON'T YOU KNOW THAT WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE AN ADOPTION UNLESS OUR PRIOR APPROVAL IS TAKEN?

THERE WAS NO TIME, SIR. THE KING WAS ON HIS DEATH-BED AND...



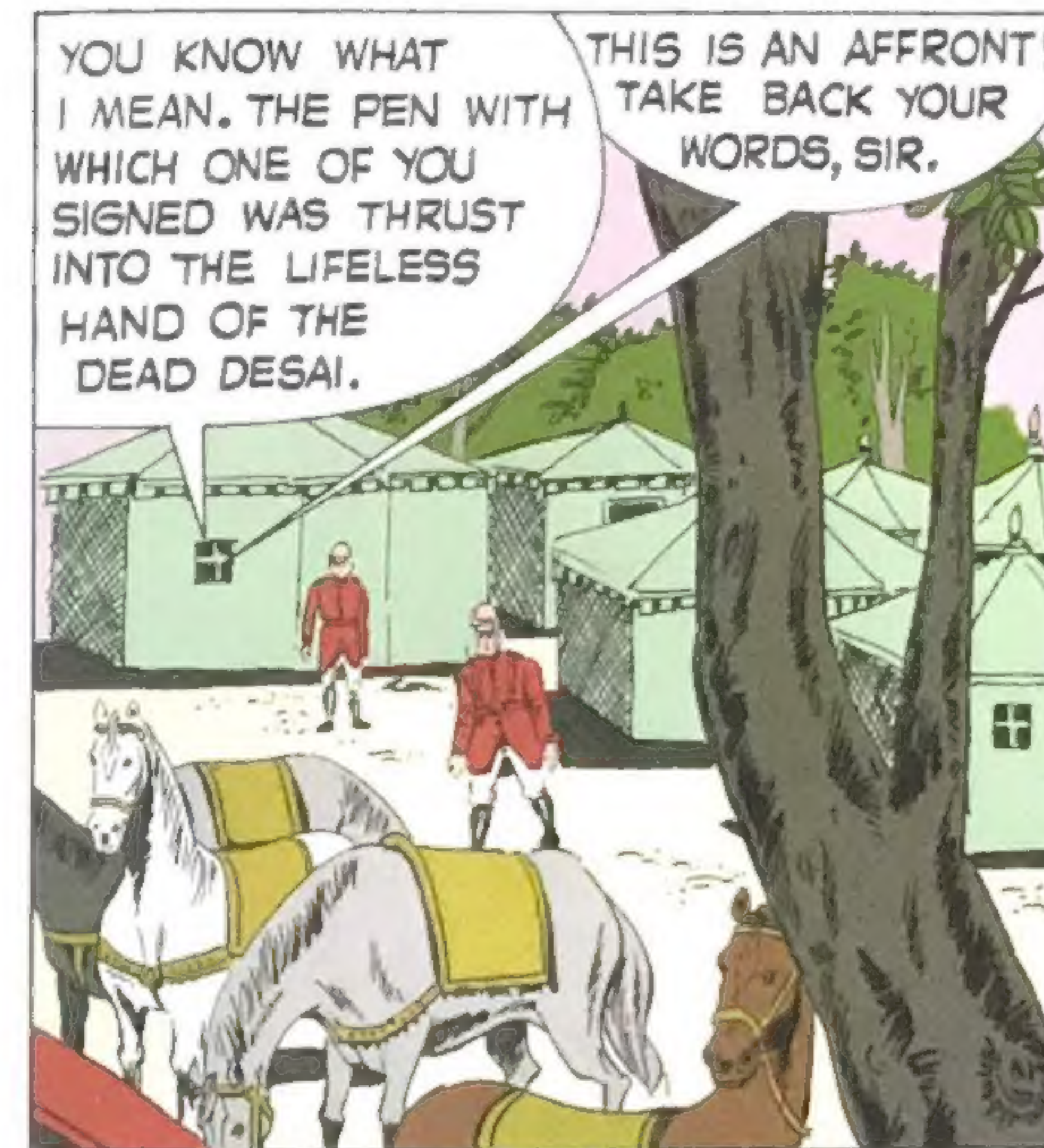
AND HE DIED BY THE TIME YOU GOT THE LETTER OF ADOPTION READY!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SIR?



YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. THE PEN WITH WHICH ONE OF YOU SIGNED WAS THRUST INTO THE LIFELESS HAND OF THE DEAD DESAI.

THIS IS AN AFFRONT! TAKE BACK YOUR WORDS, SIR.



THACKERAY REMAINED ADAMANT.

I'LL SEND MY REPORT TO MR. CHAPLIN. MEANWHILE, I WANT LAW AND ORDER TO BE MAINTAINED IN KITTUR.

WE HAVE NEVER NEEDED YOUR HELP FOR THAT AND WE DON'T NEED IT NOW!

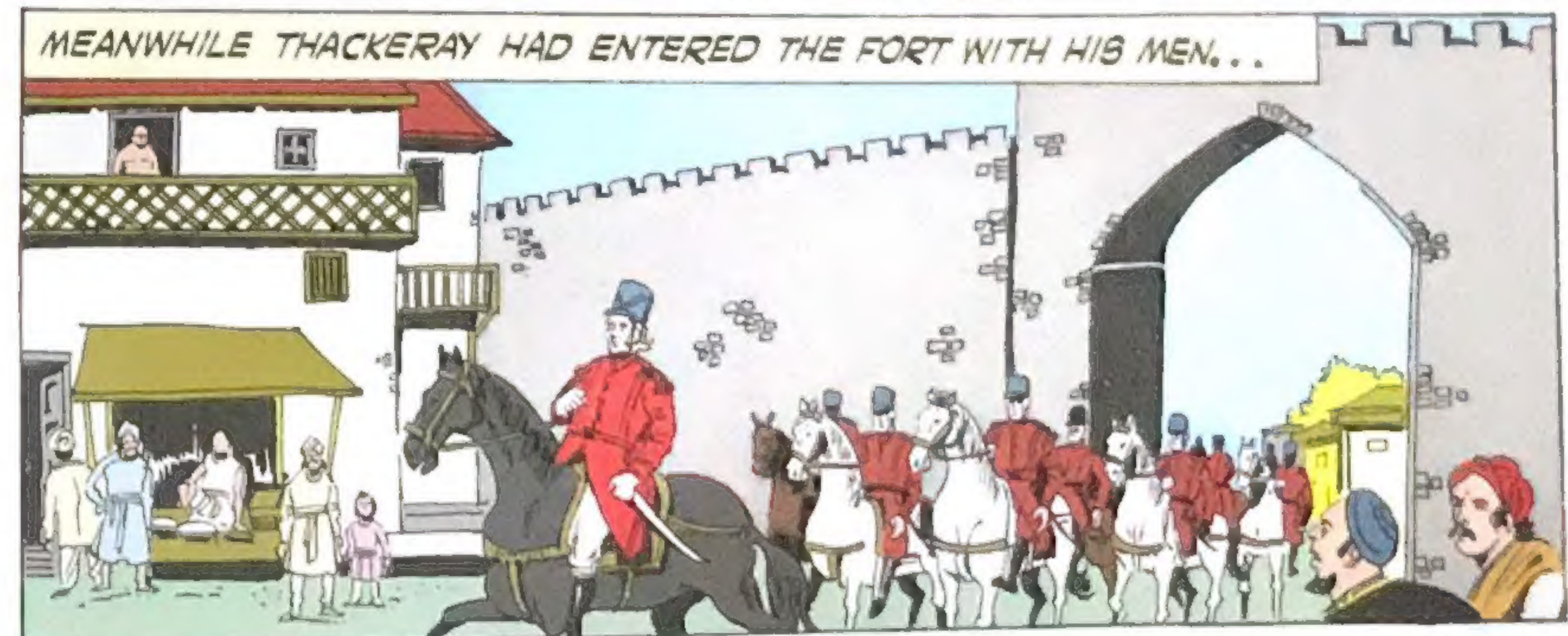


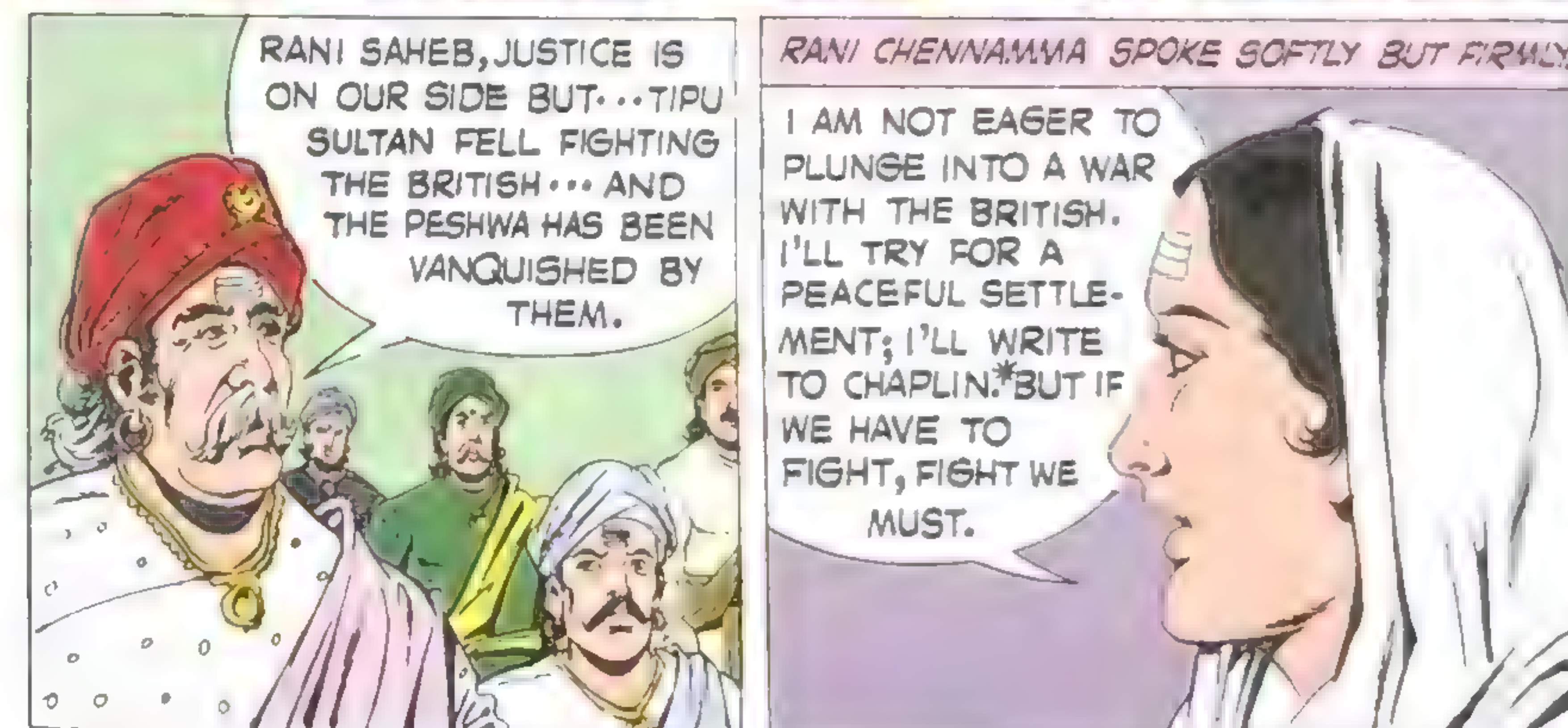
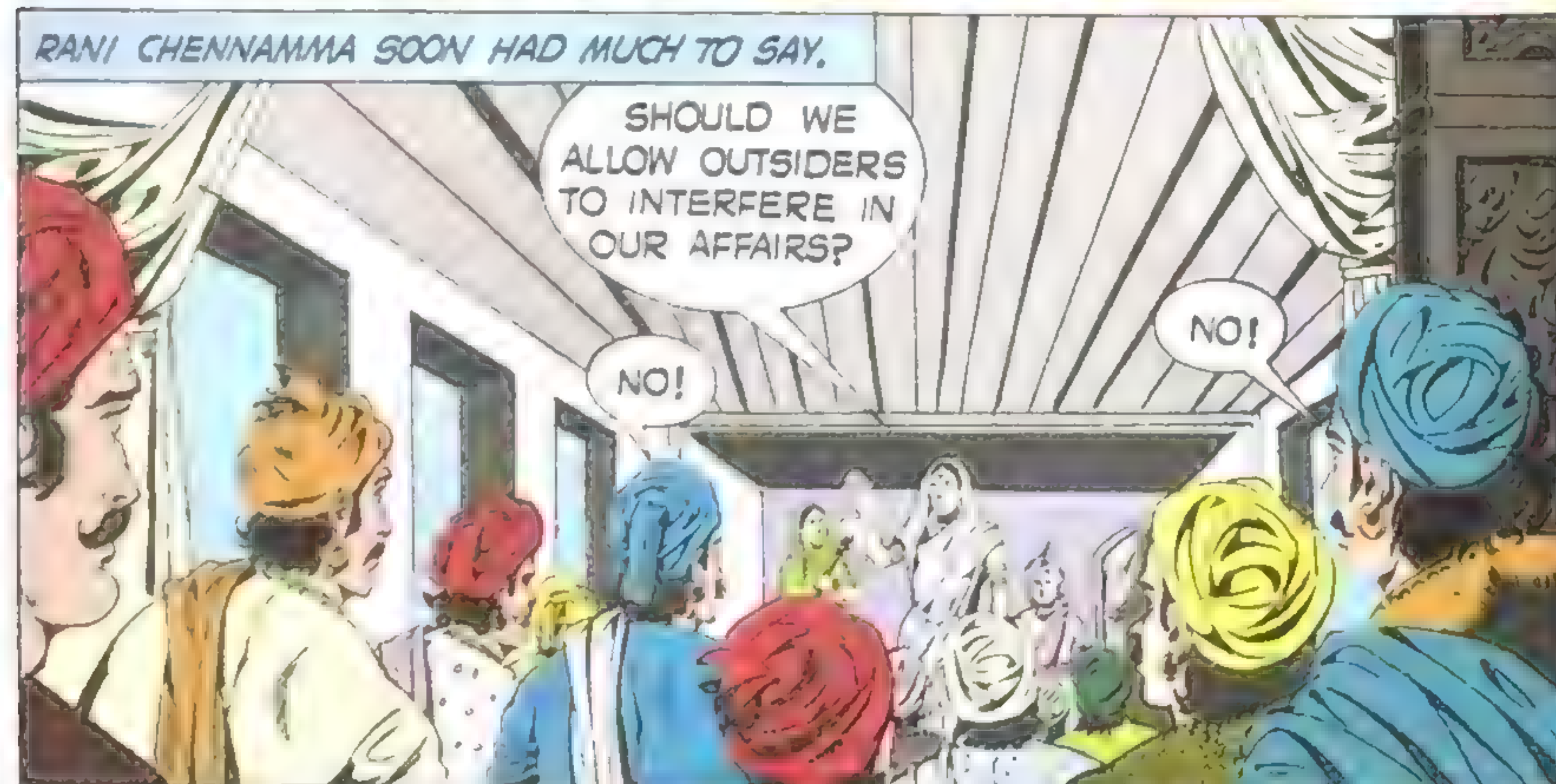
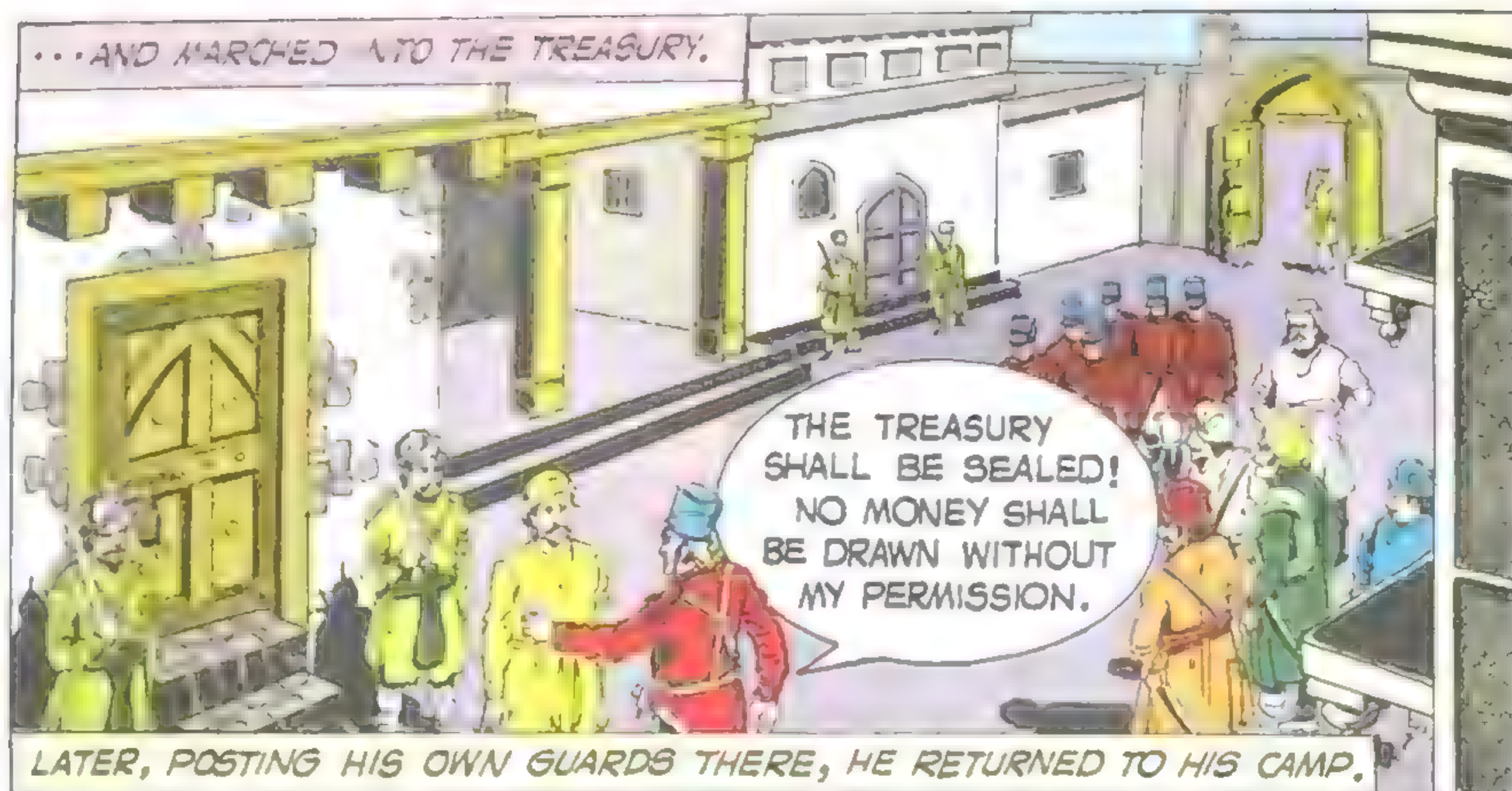
WHEN GURU SIDDAPPA REPORTED THE TALK HE HAD WITH THACKERAY TO THE QUEEN—

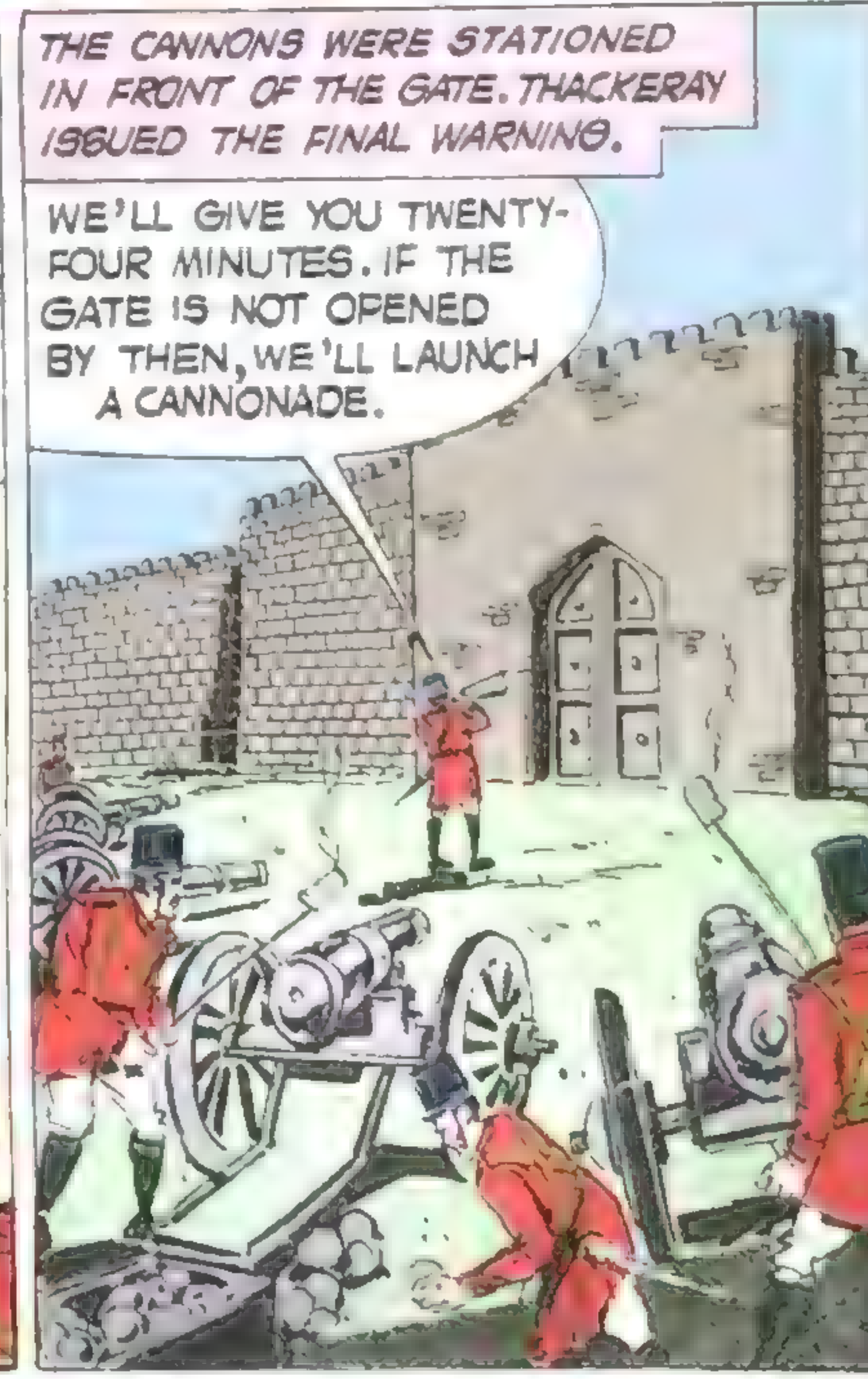
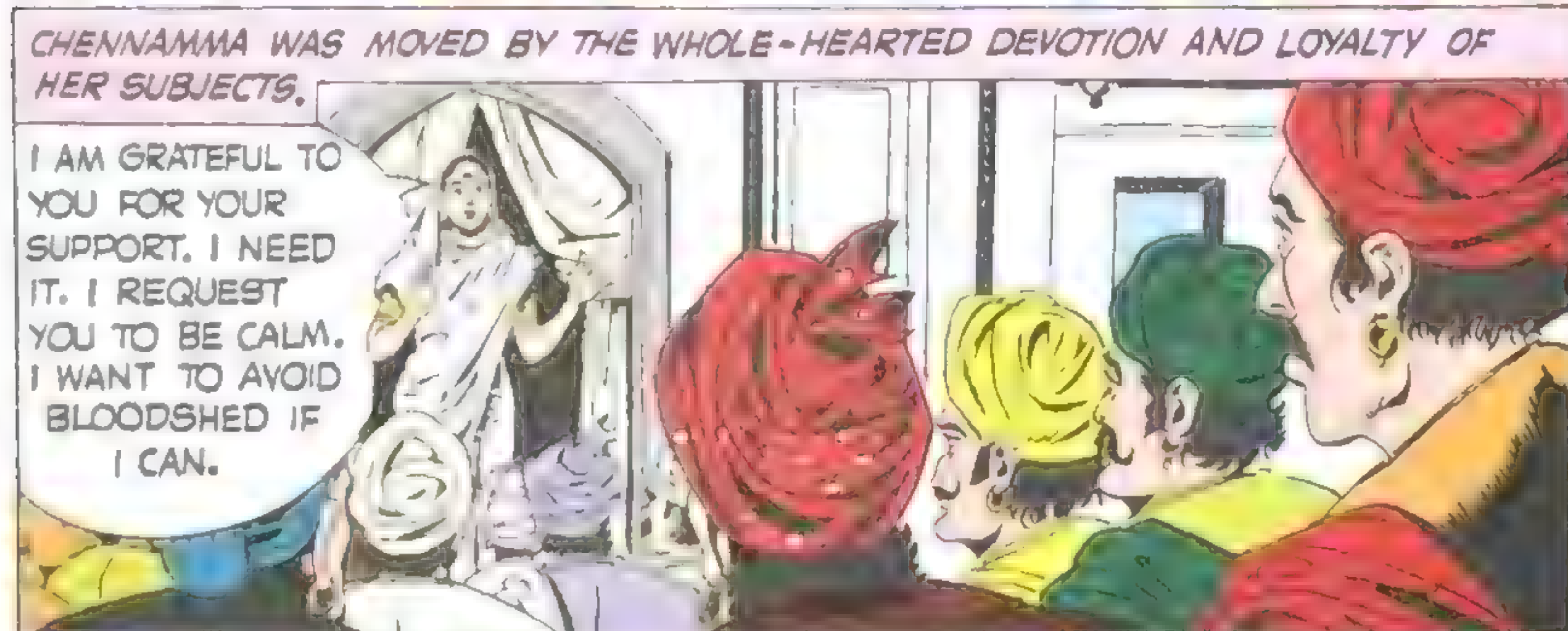
WE WILL NOT TOLERATE THE HIGH-HANDED BEHAVIOUR OF THE ENGLISH COLLECTOR! LET THE COUNCILLORS MEET TO DISCUSS THE ISSUES RAISED BY HIM.

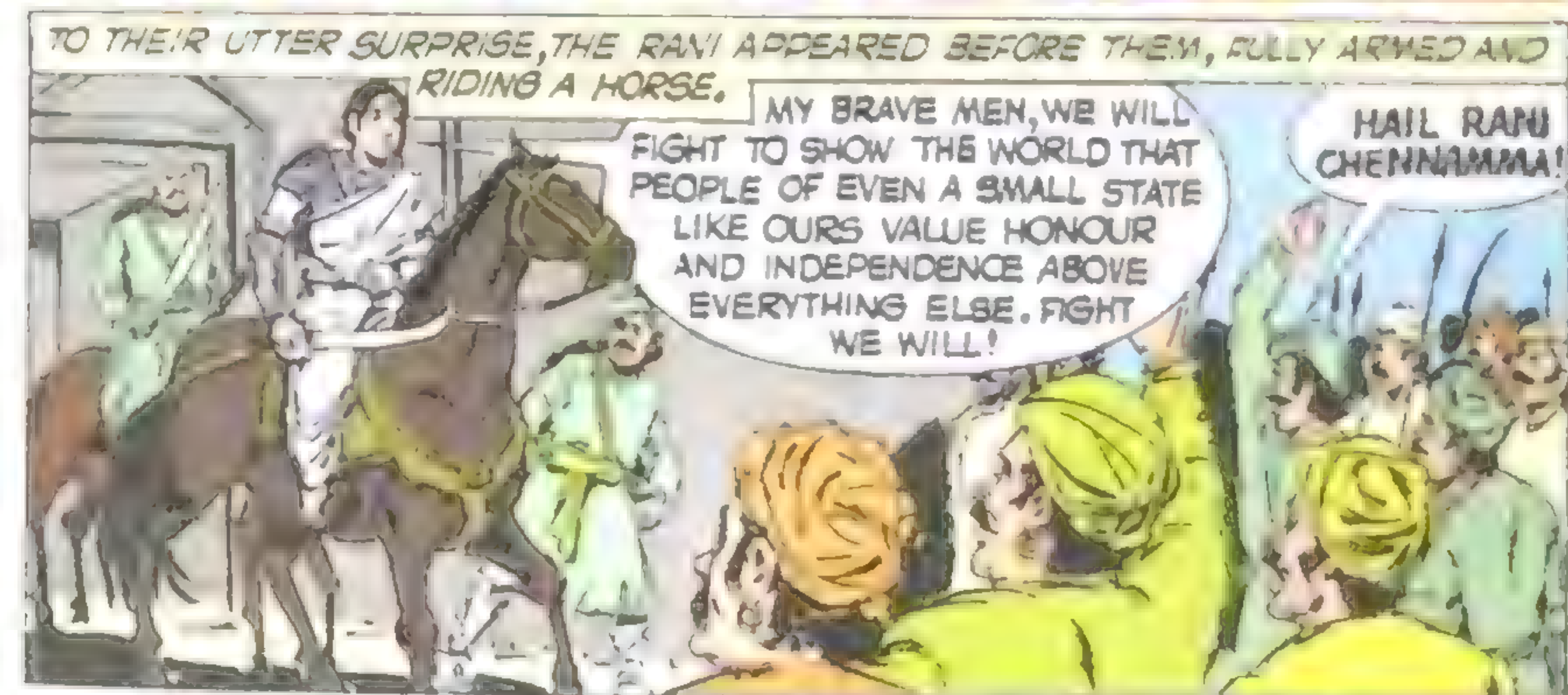
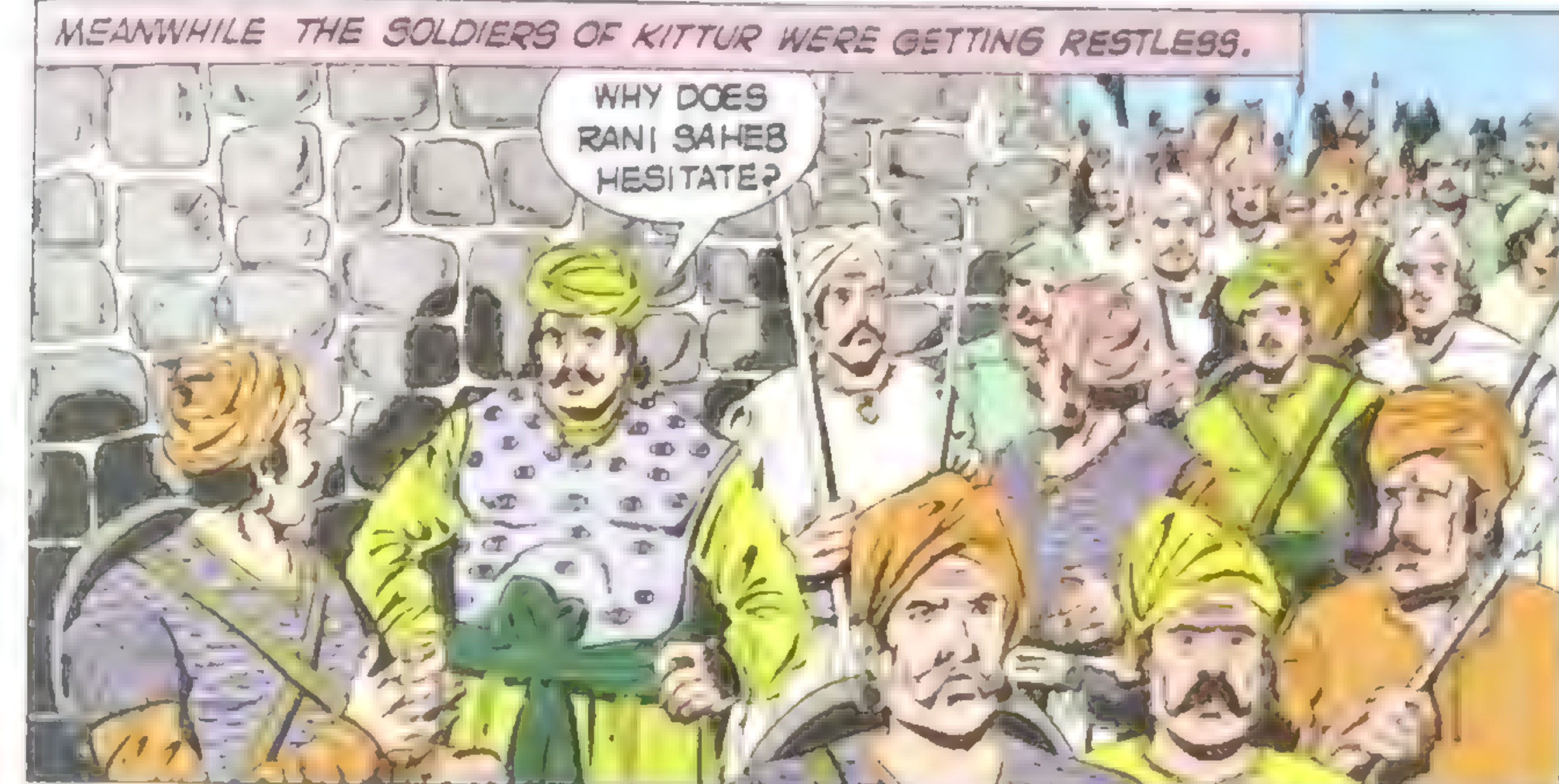
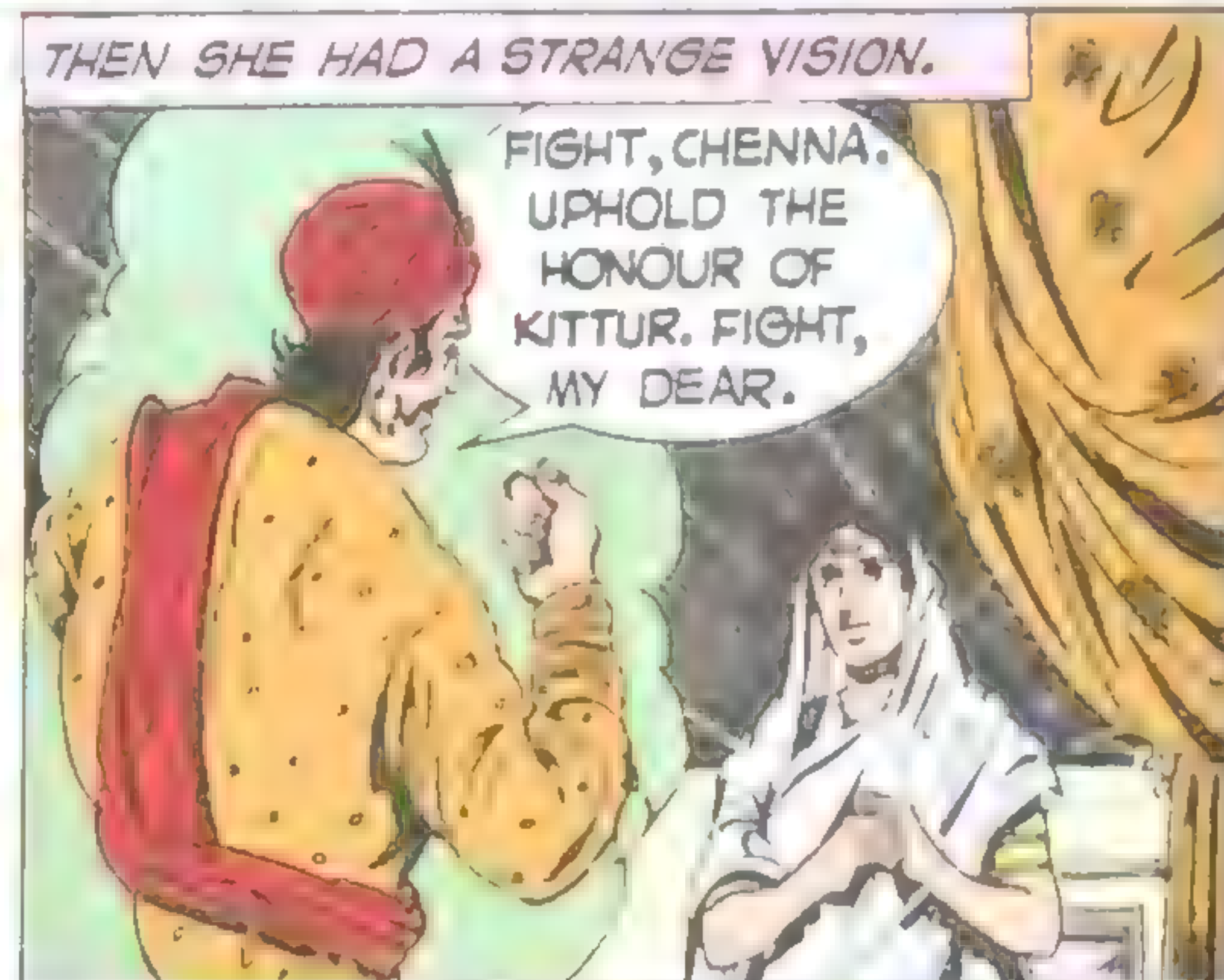


MEANWHILE THACKERAY HAD ENTERED THE FORT WITH HIS MEN...









MEANWHILE THACKERAY'S MEN WERE WAITING PATIENTLY.

THEY WILL OPEN THE GATE.



SEE WHAT DID I SAY?

WE HAVE WON— WITHOUT A SHOT BEING FIRED!

BUT TO THEIR GREAT SURPRISE, CHENNAMMA'S SOLDIERS POURED OUT OF THE FORT SHOUTING WAR CRIES.

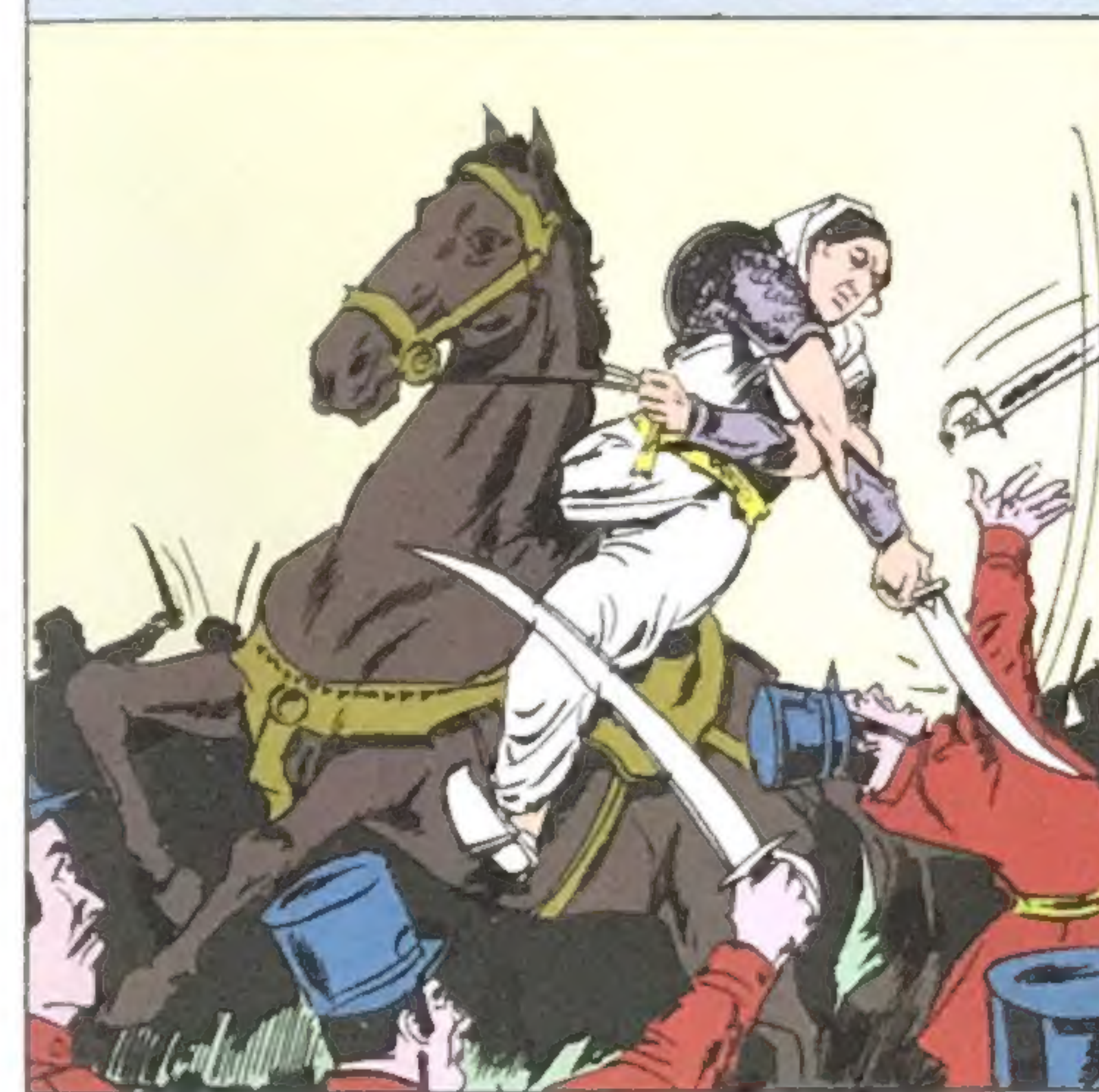
HAR HAR MAHDEV*!

RANI CHENNAMMA KI JAI!



*A WAR CRY

RANI CHENNAMMA WAS THE FIRST TO STRIKE.



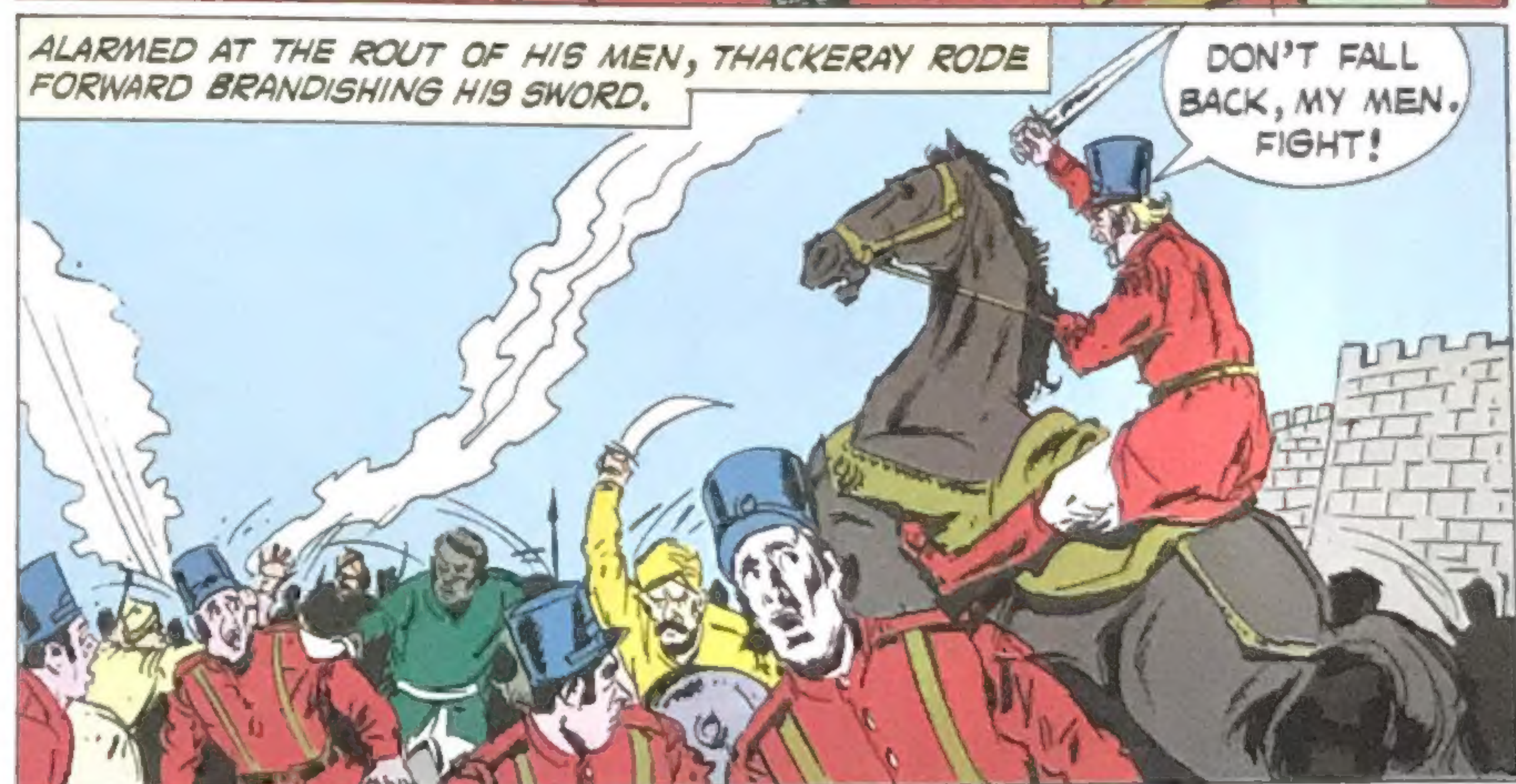
AN AFRICAN IMMIGRANT, FIGHTING FOR CHENNAMMA, CAUSED HAVOC IN THE BRITISH ARMY.



RUN!

ALARMED AT THE ROUT OF HIS MEN, THACKERAY RODE FORWARD BRANDISHING HIS SWORD.

DON'T FALL BACK, MY MEN. FIGHT!



WHEN SAYID BALAPPA, A MUSLIM BODYGUARD OF CHENNAMMA TOOK AIM AT THACKERAY —



BUT BALAPPA HAD ALREADY PRESSED THE TRIGGER.



AS THACKERAY FELL, GURU SIDDAPPA, RAYANNA AND OTHER VETERANS SWOOPED DOWN ON THE RETREATING ENEMY...



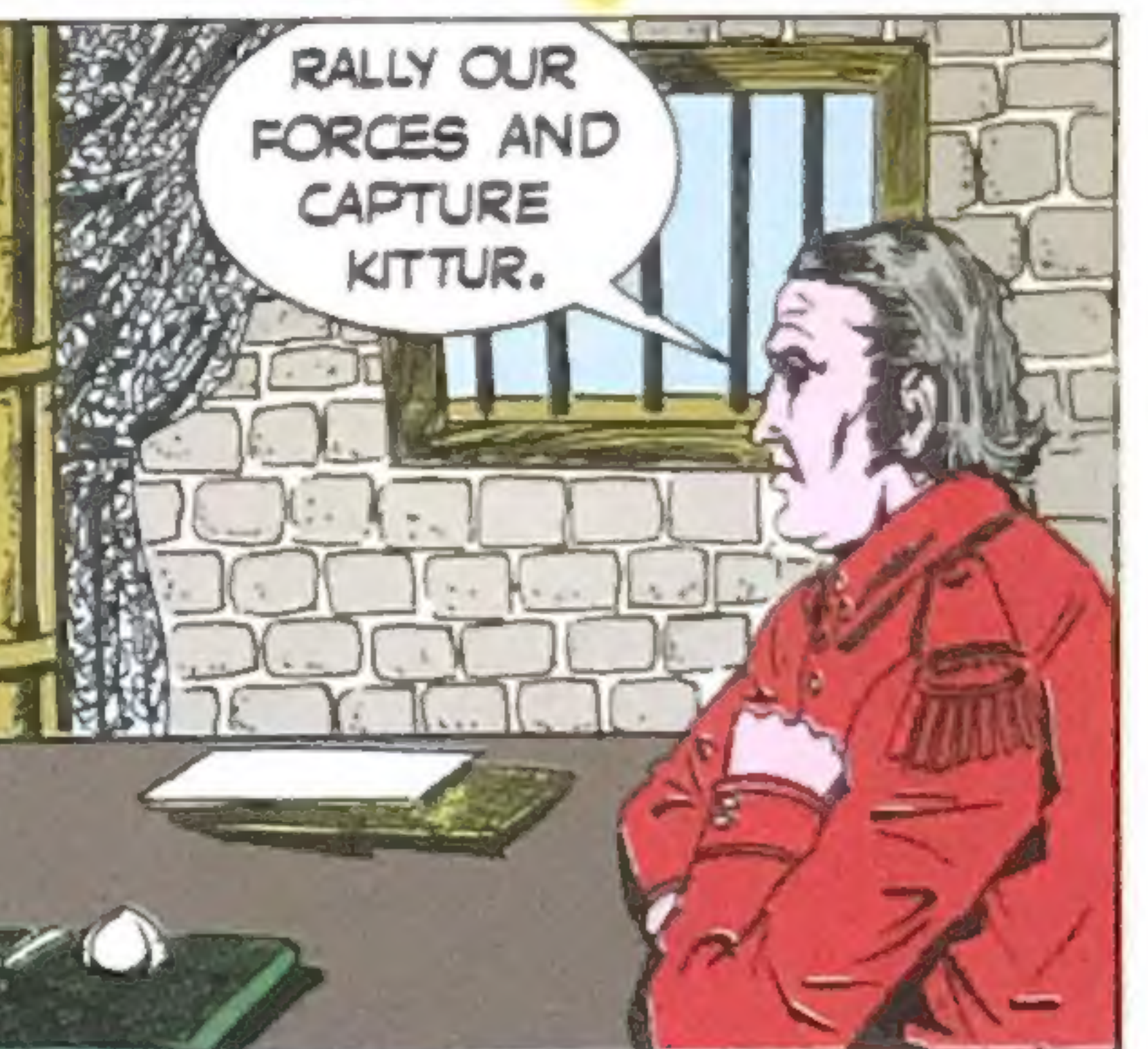
...AND SEVERAL OF THEM WERE TAKEN PRISONERS.



FOR THE CHEERING CROWD, CHENNAMMA HAD A WORD OF CAUTION.



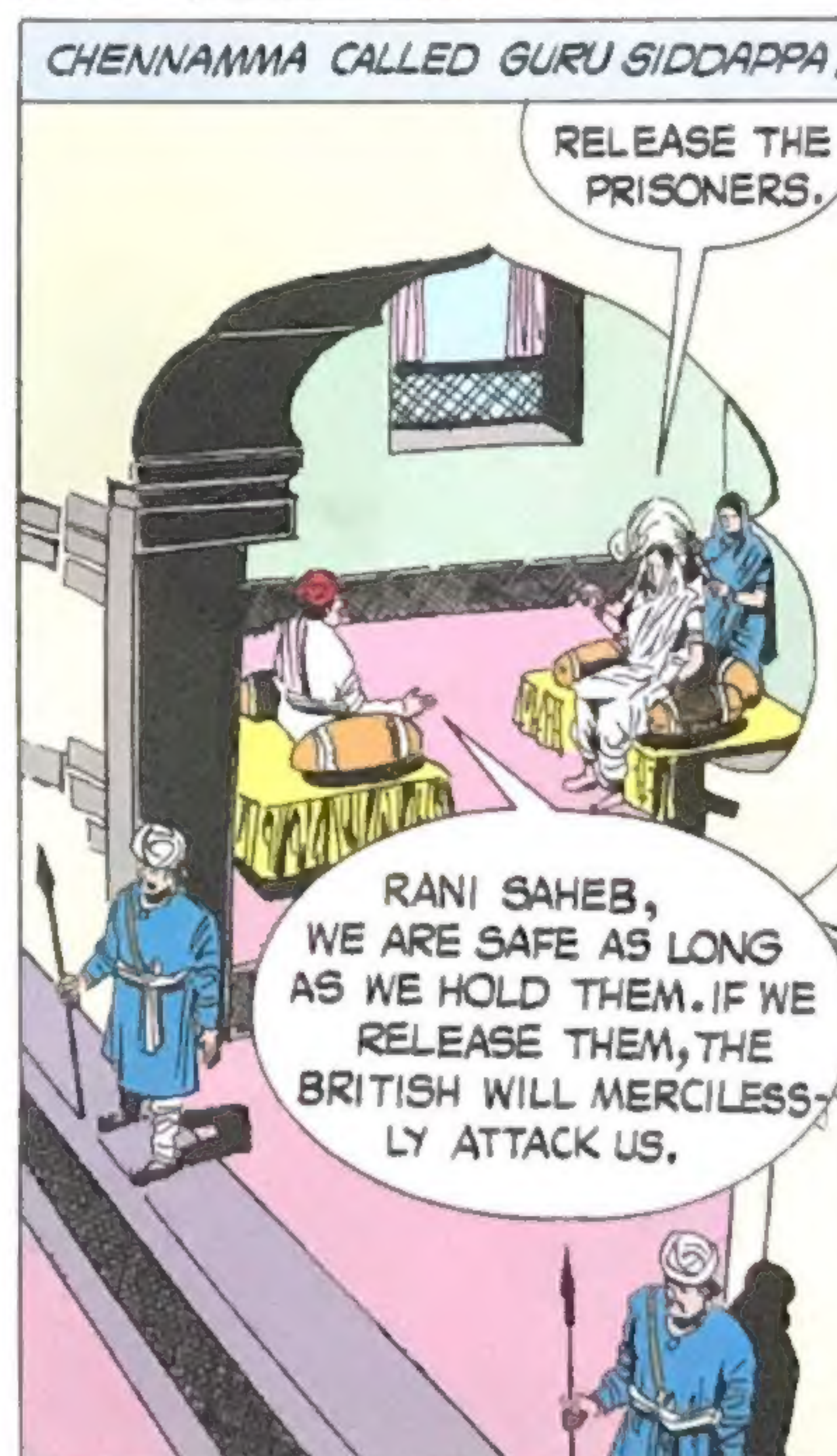
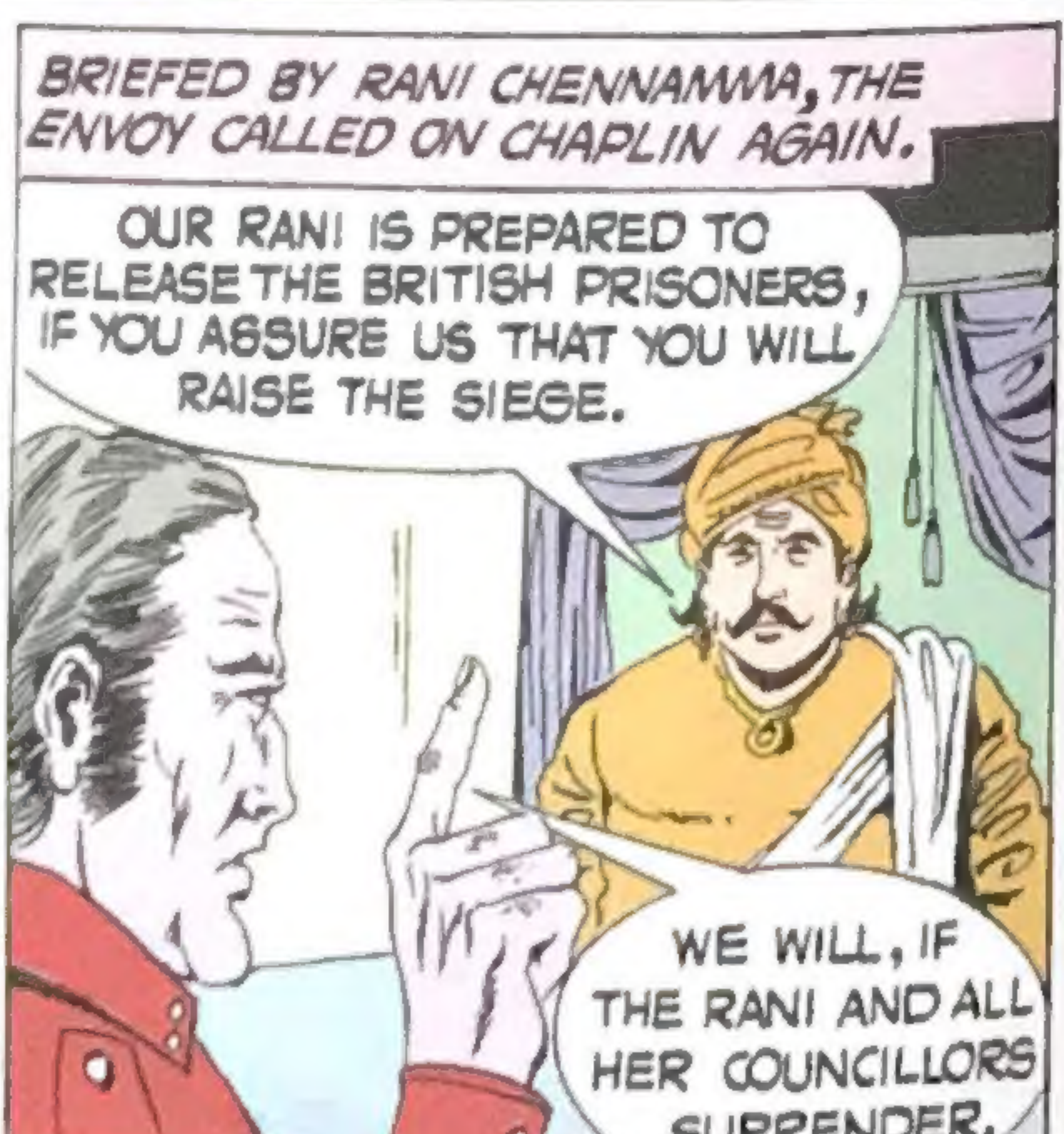
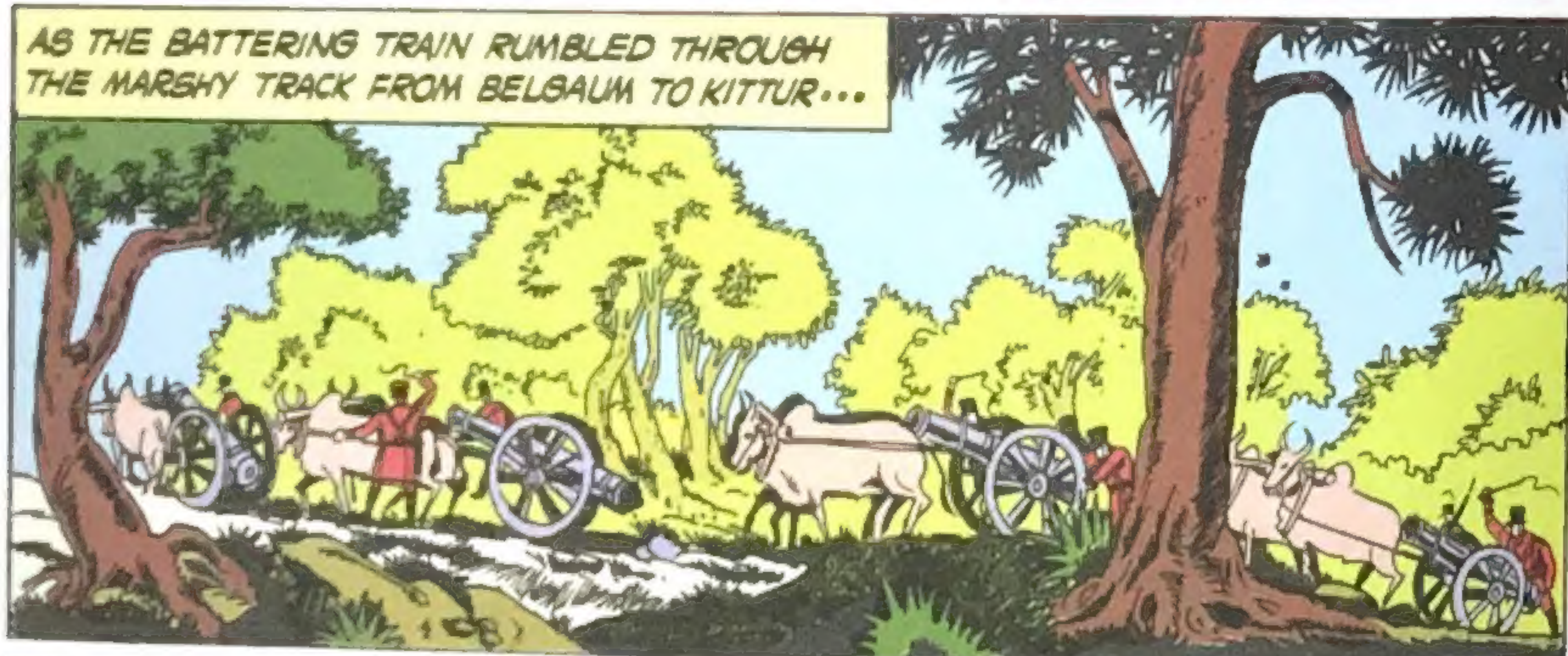
THE VICTORY OF RANI CHENNAMMA CAME AS A BLOW TO THE BRITISH. CHAPLIN, THE DECCAN COMMISSIONER RUSHED FROM PUNE TO BELGAUM AND HELD TALKS WITH THE COMMANDING OFFICERS.



THE BRITISH FORCES FROM BOMBAY AND MADRAS ARRIVED AT KITTUR AND LAID SIEGE TO THE FORT.



WHAT IF THEY ARE DEAD? THERE MUST BE MANY SUCH.



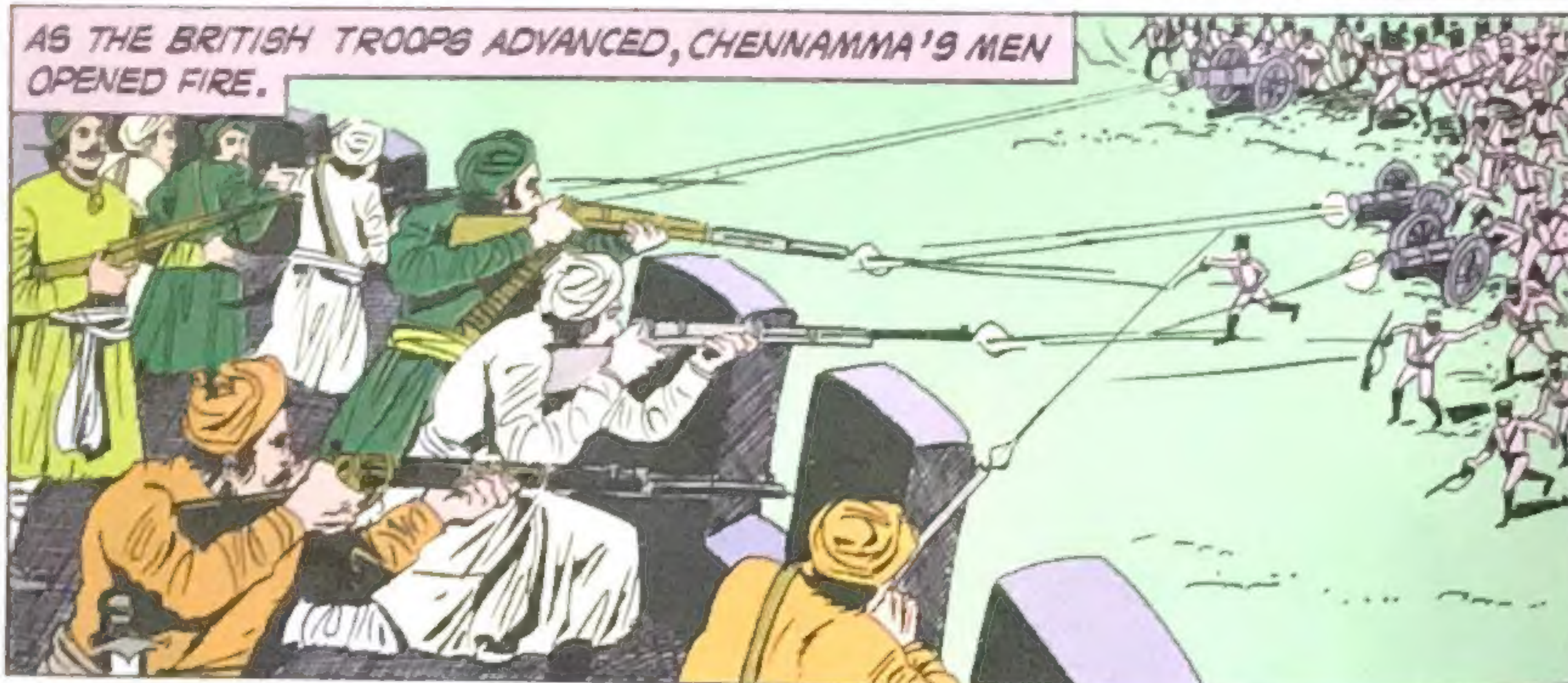
THE PRISONERS WALKED OUT OF THE FORT. TWO OF THEM, STEVENSON AND ELIOT CALLED ON CHAPLIN.



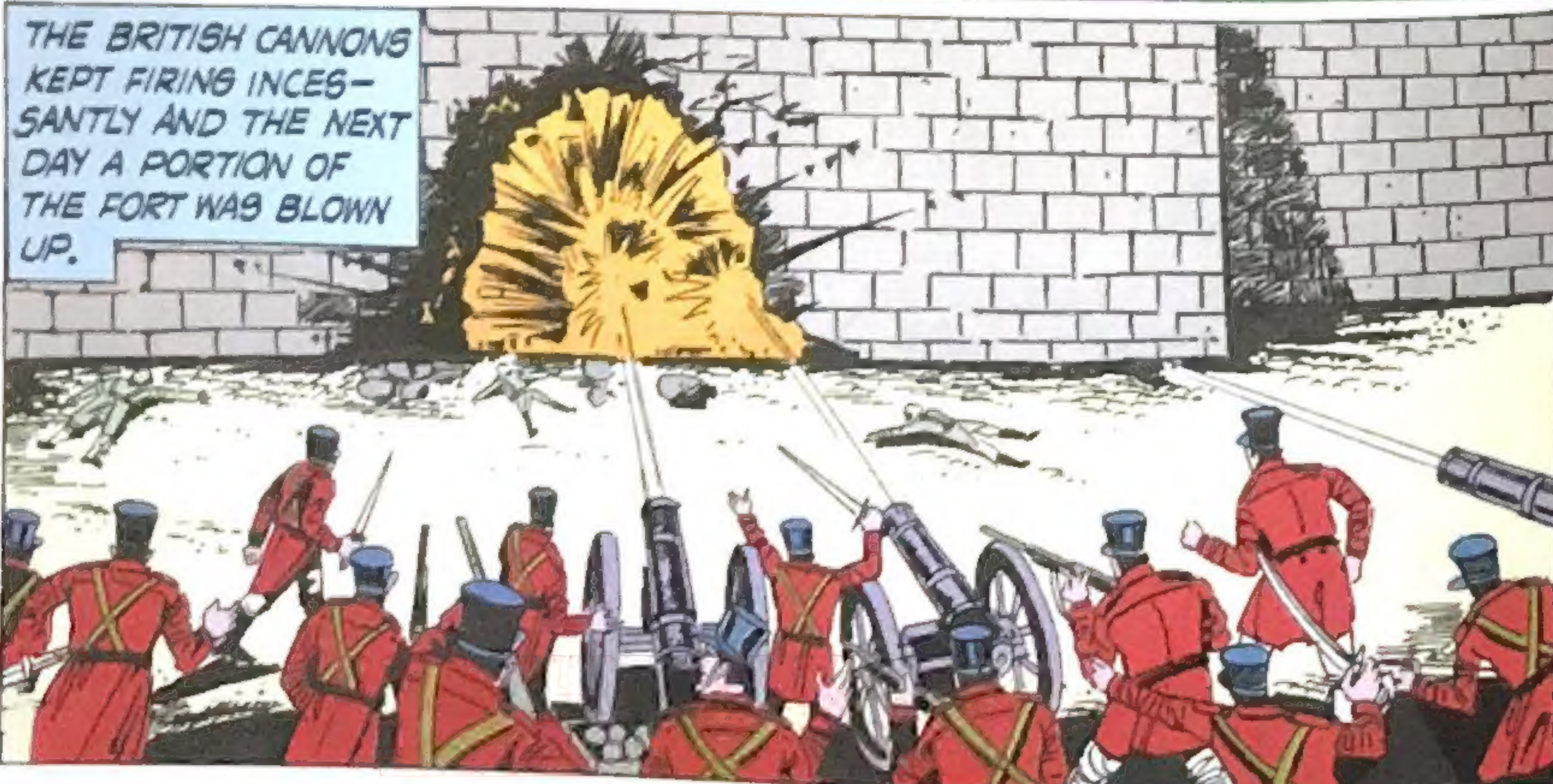
SIR, WE WERE TREATED WELL BY THE RANI. SHE WANTS FRIENDSHIP WITH THE BRITISH. AVOID BLOODSHED, SIR.

IT IS TOO LATE NOW, TO TALK OF PEACE.

AS THE BRITISH TROOPS ADVANCED, CHENNAMMA'S MEN OPENED FIRE.



THE BRITISH CANNONS KEPT FIRING INCES-
SANTLY AND THE NEXT
DAY A PORTION OF
THE FORT WAS BLOWN
UP.



THE ENEMY POURED INTO THE FORT AND A FIERCE BATTLE FOLLOWED.

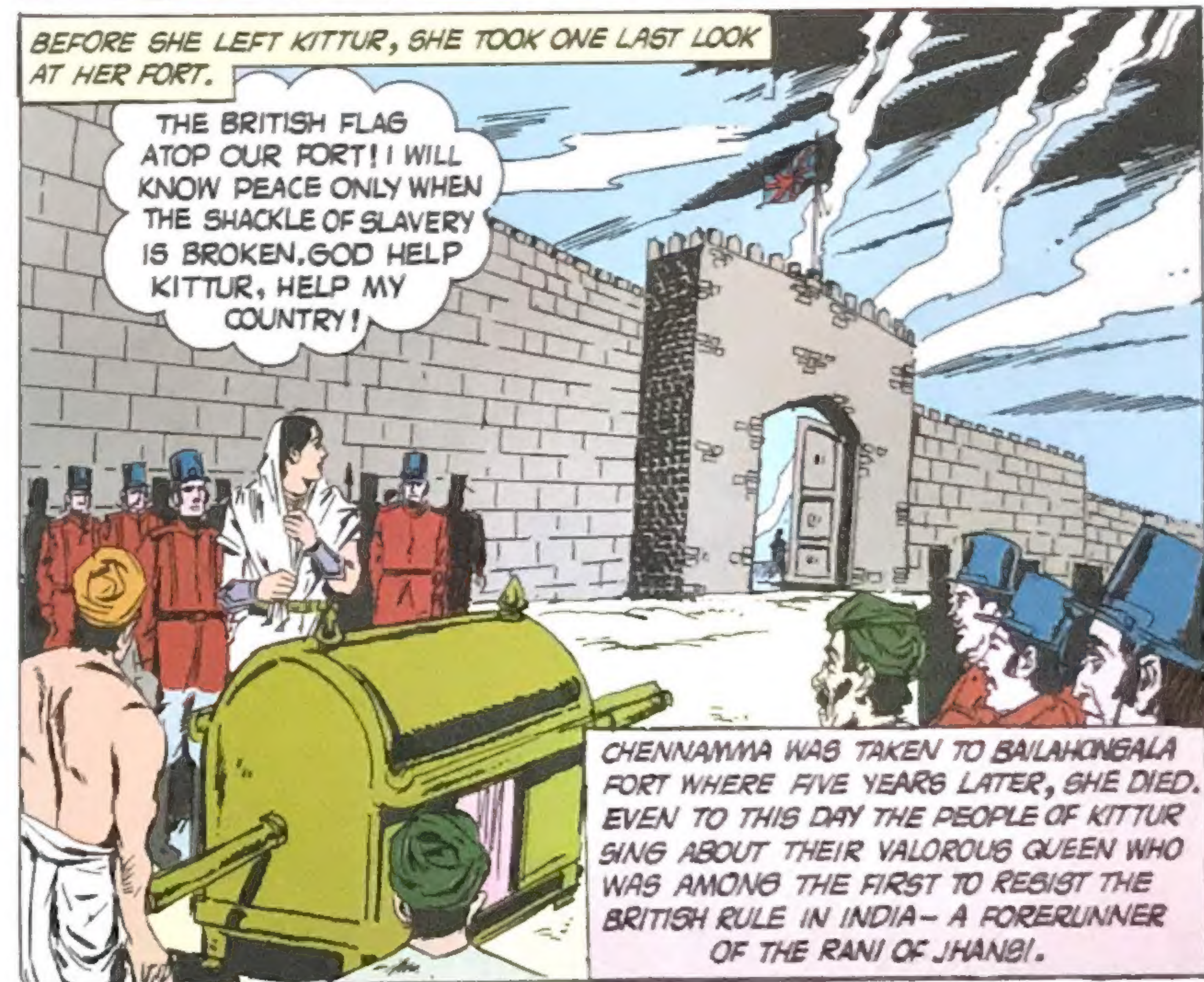


CHENNAMMA LOST HEAVILY AND WAS FINALLY TAKEN PRISONER.



MY ONLY REGRET IS THAT I COULDN'T DIE FIGHTING ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

BEFORE SHE LEFT KITTUR, SHE TOOK ONE LAST LOOK AT HER FORT.



THE BRITISH FLAG ATOP OUR FORT! I WILL KNOW PEACE ONLY WHEN THE SHACKLE OF SLAVERY IS BROKEN. GOD HELP KITTUR, HELP MY COUNTRY!

CHENNAMMA WAS TAKEN TO BAILAHONGALA FORT WHERE FIVE YEARS LATER, SHE DIED. EVEN TO THIS DAY THE PEOPLE OF KITTUR SING ABOUT THEIR VALOROUS QUEEN WHO WAS AMONG THE FIRST TO RESIST THE BRITISH RULE IN INDIA - A FORERUNNER OF THE RANI OF JHANGI.